

This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

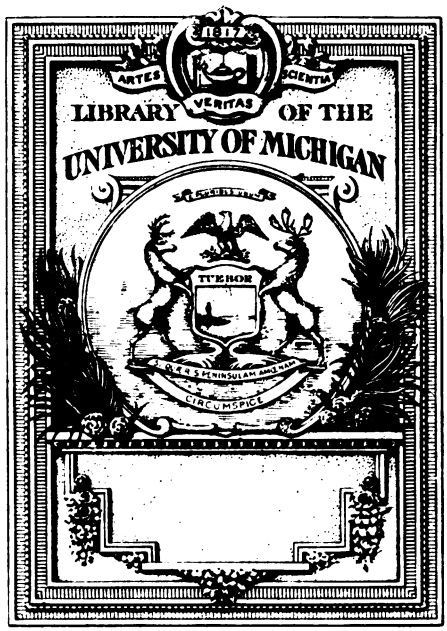
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

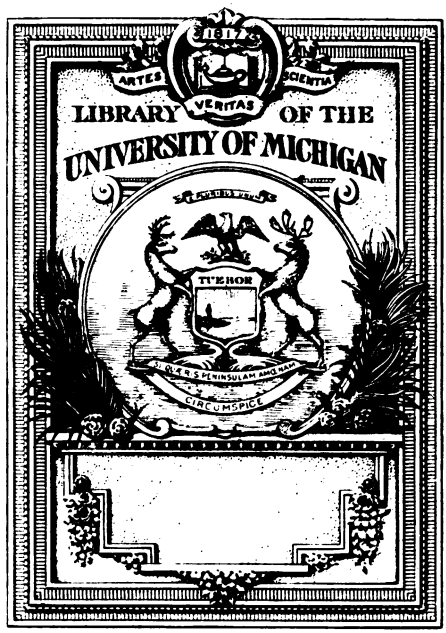
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`


ARTES
VERITAS
SCIENTIA
LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
TUEBOR
CIRCUMSPICE

BX
5133
.T568
1703


ARTES
VERITAS
SCIENTIA
LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
TI'E HOR
CIRCUMSPICE

BX
5133
.T568
1703

Arch-Biſhop

TILLOTSON's

Twelfth Volume.


The most Reverend
Dr. IOHN TILLOTSON
late Arch Bishop of Canterbury.

252 T56

FIFTEEN SERMONS ON Various Subjects.

Viz.

Of Faith in general; its Nature, Cauſe, Degrees, Efficacy and Kinds.
Of a Religious and Divine Faith, *viz.* a Perſwaſion of the Principles of Natural Religion; and of things Supernatural and reveal'd.
Of the Faith or Perſwaſion of a Divine Revelation.
Of the Teſtimony of the Spirit to Divine Revelation.
Of the Reaſonableneſs, Uſefulneſs, and Efficacy of Divine Faith.
Of the Chriſtian Faith; the Means of conveying the Chriſtian Doctrine; and our Obligation to receive it.
Of the Chriſtian Faith conſider'd as Sanctifying, Juſtifying, and Saving.
Of the Goſpel Covenant, and its conſiſtency with the Merit of Chriſt.
Of the Nature and Teſtimony of Miracles, particularly thoſe wrought in confirmation of Chriſtianity.
Of the Advantages of Truth, in Oppoſition to Error.

By the Moſt Reverend
Dr. *JOHN TILLOTSON*,
Late Lord Arch-Biſhop of *Canterbury*.

Being The TWELFTH VOLUME,
Publiſhed from the Originals,
By *Ralph Barker*, D. D. Chaplain to his Grace.

LONDON,
Printed for **Ri. Chiſwell**, at the *Roſe* and *Crown* in St. *Paul*'s Church-yard, 1703.

THE

CONTENTS.

SERMON I.

Of the Nature of Faith in general.

HEB. XI. 6.

But without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God. pag. 1.

373718

SERM. II.

Of a Religious and Divine Faith.

HEB. XI. 6.

But without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God. p. 29.

SERM. III, IV.

Of the Faith or Perſwaſion of a Divine Revelation.

HEB.

HEB. XI. 6.

But without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God. p. 63, 89.

SERM. V.

Of the Teſtimony of the Spirit, to the Truth of the Goſpel.

HEB. XI. 6.

But without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God. p. 119.

The Contents of

SERM. VI.

The Efficacy, Uſefulneſs, and Reaſonableneſs of *Divine Faith.*

HEB. XI. 6.

But without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God. p. 145.

SERM.

SERM. VII.

Of the Chriſtian Faith, the Means of its Conveyance, and our Obligation to receive it.

JOHN XX. 31.

But theſe are written, that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God, and that beleeving ye might have life through his Name. p. 185.

SERM.

SERM. VIII.

Of the Chriſtian Faith, which Sanctifies, Juſtifies, and Saves.

JOHN XX. 31.

But theſe are written that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his Name. p. 211.

SERM.

SERM. IX.

Of Juſtifying Faith.

JOHN XX. 31.

But theſe are written, that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his Name.

P. 241

SERM.

The Contents of

SERM. XIV, XV.

The Advantages of Truth, in Oppoſition to Error.

---

1 JOHN IV. 4, 5.

Ye are of God, little Children, and have overcome them: becauſe greater is he that is in You, than he that is in the World. They

the Twelfth Volume.

They are of the World: therefore ſpeak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

P. 397, 425.

SERM.

SERMON I.

Of the Nature of FAITH in general.

The firſt Sermon on this Text.

HEB. XI. 6.

But without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God.

BEFORE I come to the Words themſelves, in order to our better underſtanding of them, we will take into conſideration the Deſign of this Epiſtle, that ſo we may ſee more clearly the relation that theſe Words have to the foregoing Diſcourſe. Who the Penman of this Epiſtle was

Volume XII.

I shall not tell you, because I do not know, nor is it much material to know it; but whoever wrote it, he had this very good Design in the writing of it, to perswade the *Jews* to hold fast the Profession of the Gospel, notwithstanding all the Sufferings and Persecutions it exposed them to. And to this purpose he shews at large, what Prerogatives the Gospel hath above the legal Administration. *The Law was given by the disposition of Angels, in the hand of a Mediator,* that is, *Moses*: but the Gospel is revealed to us by *the Son of God*; a Person, not only above *Moses*, who was a meer man; but above Angels. The Gospel is the substance and reality of the Types and Ceremonies, and the very *good things themselves*, that were obscurely represented by those *Shadows*. It is *a Testament established upon better Promises*, the clear Promises of eternal Life, which were but darkly revealed in the Old Testament, *that* being establish'd either solely or principally upon temporal Promises: and it is a perfect and compleat Dispensation, that hath in it all things requisite to attain its end, and therefore shall

ſhall never ſtand in need of any farther Change or Alteration. Theſe are the heads of thoſe Arguments which the Author of this Epiſtle does largely diſcourſe upon. Sermon I.

Now the Goſpel having in theſe reſpects the advantage of the Legal Diſpenſation, the Apoſtle doth all along in this Epiſtle earneſtly exhort the *Jews* to a conſtant Profeſſion and ſteadfaſt Belief of the Goſpel, and not to return back from Chriſtianity to Judaiſm, which was a far leſs perfect Inſtitution. *Ch.* 2. 1. *Therefore we ought to give the more earneſt heed to the things which we have heard, leſt at any time we ſhould let them ſlip,* παραῤῥυῶμεν, *leſt we ſhould fall away,* ſo the word may be render'd. And *Ch.* 3. 12. *Take heed, brethren, leſt there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.* And *Ch.* 4. 1. *Let us therefore fear, leſt a promiſe being left us of entring into his reſt, any of you ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it.* And *Ch.* 10. 23. *Let us hold faſt the Profeſſion of our faith without wavering.*

Volume XII.

After which he declares the danger of Apoſtacy, or falling off from the Belief and Profeſſion of the Goſpel which they had entertained; *v.* 26. *For if we ſin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſin.* He tells them they would be ſhrewdly tempted to Apoſtacy by the Reproaches, Afflictions and Perſecutions that they would meet withal: but the Promiſes of the Goſpel were ſufficient to ſupport and bear up good men under theſe, if they were but firmly perſwaded of the truth of them; and tho' they did not for the preſent receive the things promiſed, yet a firm belief of them would carry them through all Sufferings, and make them hold out under them. *The juſt ſhall live by faith. v.* 38.

And having mention'd the power of Faith, that is, of a confident perſwaſion of the truth and reality of the Promiſes of the Goſpel to ſupport Men under Sufferings, he gives an account how Faith uſes to have this influence,

ver.

Sermon I.

ver. 1. *Faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for,* ſo we render the word ὑπόστασις: but it might be much better render'd, both according to the frequent uſe of it in the *Septuagint*, and in the New Teſtament, *a confidence of things hoped for*, that is, a confident expectation of things hoped for, or a firm perſwaſion that our Hopes will not be fruſtrated. And as this is more agreeable to the Scope and Deſign of the Apoſtle, ſo likewiſe to the common acceptation of this word in the New Teſtament, for which I will appeal to two places. 2 *Cor.* ix. 4. *That we be not put to ſhame in this confidence of boaſting,* ἐν τῇ ὑποστάσει ταύτῃ. The other Text is in this Epiſt. *Ch.* iii. 14. *That we hold faſt the beginning of our confidence,* τὴν ἀρχὴν ὑποστάσεως, which is of the very ſame ſenſe with παῤῥησία, at the 6th ver. *If we hold faſt the confidence* παῤῥησίαν, and *rejoycing of the hope firm unto the end. And the evidence of things not ſeen,* ἔλεγχος, *the conviction,* a being convinced, or perſwaded of the truth of thoſe things, for which we have no occular or ſenſible demonſtration. Now if Faith in the Promiſes of the Goſpel do perſwade us

and give us ſatisfaction that we ſhall receive a Reward, which will outweigh and countervail our preſent Sufferings, then Faith is likely to ſupport us under Sufferings.

And that this is no ſtrange thing which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of Faith, he ſhews that in all Ages Faith hath been the principle of all Holy and Heroick Actions. *By it the Elders obtained a good report*; it is that which made the Holy Men of the Old Teſtament ſo famous; and this he proves throughout this Chapter, by a large induction of particular Inſtances, in which we ſee the power of Faith, the wonderful effects of it, and the mighty works it hath done in the World.

But becauſe he ſaid before that *Faith is the evidence*, or *conviction of things not ſeen*, as well as *a confident expectation of things hoped for*, before he comes to inſtance in the effects of Faith upon particular perſons in the Old Teſtament, he proves it to be *The evidence of things not ſeen*, that is, being convinc'd and perſwaded of things of which we have no ſenſible and o-

cular

cular demonſtration, *ver.* 3d. *Thro' Faith we underſtand that the Worlds were framed by the word of God, ſo that the things which are ſeen, were not made of things which do appear*; that is, tho' we were not preſent at the making of the World, nor did ſee it framed; yet we are ſatisfied, and do believe that it was made by the powerful word of God, and that all thoſe things which we ſee were not produced out of things which do now appear, but either immediately out of nothing, or a dark confuſed Chaos. Sermon I.

And having thus prov'd that we may be perſwaded of things we do not ſee, of things paſt, or future, he comes to the particular inſtances of the Holy Men of the Old Teſtament, in whom the power of Faith did appear. He begins with *Abel*, who being perſwaded of the Being of God, and the Perfection and Excellency of the Divine Nature, and conſequently that he was worthy to be ſerved with the beſt, by virtue of this Faith *offer'd up to God a more excellent Sacrifice than Cain.* The ſecond Inſtance is in *Enoch*, who being perſwaded of the Being of God,

Volume XII.

and of his Goodneſs to reward them that ſerve him, was a righteous Man, and ſtudious to pleaſe God; and as a reward of this Faith and Obedience, *God tranſlated him, that he ſhould not ſee death*; upon which the Apoſtle aſſumes, *ver. 6. But without Faith, it is impoſſible to pleaſe God.* As if he had ſaid, unleſs a Man do believe, and be perſwaded of ſome Principles, it is impoſſible any Man ſhould be Religious, or endeavour to do any thing that is pleaſing or acceptable to God: for Religion, and the Service of God, and an endeavour to pleaſe him, do ſuppoſe at leaſt that I believe and am perſwaded of theſe two things, of the Being, and of the Goodneſs of God, that there is ſuch a Being as I ſerve and ſeek to pleaſe, and that his goodneſs is ſuch, that it will not be in vain to ſerve him, he will not let me be a loſer by it.

And that here by *pleaſing*, we are to underſtand in general the performing any action of Religion, is evident from the equivalent terms which are uſed in the next words, *For he that cometh to God, muſt believe that he is, and*

Sermon I.

and that he is a rewarder of them that ſeek him; where *coming to God*, and *ſeeking of him*, are of the ſame importance with *pleaſing him*. Now *to come to God*, and *ſeek him*, in Scripture Phraſe ſignifie the ſumm of Religion, it being uſual in the language of Scripture, to expreſs the whole of Religion by any eminent principle, or part, or effect of it; as by the knowledge, remembrance, or fear of God in the Old Teſtament; by the love of him, and faith in him, in the New; by coming to him, ſeeking him, calling upon his Name, and pleaſing of him.

Now that *coming to God*, and *ſeeking him*, are of the ſame importance here with *pleaſing of him*, will be clear to any that conſider the Apoſtle's reaſoning here in the Text, which ſuppoſeth theſe to be the ſame, otherwiſe there would be no force in his Argument. For the Propoſition which he proves is, That *without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*. The Argument he uſeth is this, If *every one that comes to God muſt believe that he is*, &c. then *without Faith it is impoſſible*

Volume XII.

impoſſible to pleaſe him; but *every one that comes to God, muſt believe that he is.* Now unleſs *coming to God*, and *ſeeking him*, be the ſame thing with *pleaſing him*, this would be no good Argument; for there would be four terms in it; but if theſe Phraſes be made equivalent, then the Argument is good. Thus, If *every one that comes to God*, that is, that will *pleaſe him*, *muſt believe that he is*, &c. then *without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe him*: but *every one that comes to God*, that is, that will *pleaſe him*, *muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him*, or *that endeavour to pleaſe him*: therefore *without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe him.*

Which Propoſition doth not only ſignifie that Faith is neceſſary to Religion, and a Condition without which it cannot be; but implies likewiſe, that it is a Cauſe or Principle of it: not only the Foundation upon which all Religion muſt be built; but the Fountain from whence it ſprings. For this I take to be imply'd in the words, not only that there can be no Religion unleſs we believe a God; but ſuppoſing

ſing this Truth firmly believ'd, that there is a God, it will have a great influence upon Men to make them Religious. For the Apoſtle having before ſpoken of the power of Faith upon *Abel* and *Enoch*, that it put them upon *pleaſing God*, he aſſumes in the next words, *but without Faith*, &c. As if he had ſaid, that you may know what was the Principle of their Religion, of their Holineſs and Obedience, let us imagine that a Man ſhould believe nothing concerning the Being of a God, or the bleſſedneſs of thoſe who ſerve him; what would be the iſſue? Why this certainly, there would be no Religion, no ſuch thing as Serving of God, or endeavouring to pleaſe him: for unleſs we believe that he is, and that he will reward thoſe who ſeek to pleaſe him, it is impoſſible, that is, it is unreaſonable to think Men ſhould attempt to pleaſe him. So that Faith is the Cauſe and Principle of Religion, it is the thing, *quo poſito, ponitur effectus*; *& quo ſublato, tollitur*; do but ſuppoſe and admit that a Man truly believes there is a God; and he will ſeek to pleaſe him: but if you ſuppoſe a Man believes no ſuch

Sermon I.

Volume XII.

ſuch thing; he will caſt off all Religion. This is the plain meaning of the Words; not as ſome have thought, that without Faith a man may perform Religious Actions, but then they would not be accepted, or pleaſing to God: but that which the Apoſtle means is, Without Faith 'tis impoſſible there ſhould be any Religion: Not that Religious Acts ſhould be performed in an acceptable manner; as if *Cain* had offer'd as good a Sacrifice as *Abel*, only Faith made the difference: but *Cain* did not believe, was not perſwaded of the Being of God and his Excellency, therefore thought to put off God with any thing; *Abel* believed, and did offer a more excellent Sacrifice, not more excellent becauſe it was mix'd with Faith, but it was more excellent in it ſelf.

The *Obſervation* therefore from theſe Words is this, that Faith is one great Principle of all Religious Actions.

In the handling of this, I ſhall endeavour,

Firſt, To fix and ſettle the true Notion of Faith, whereby we may come to

to understand the general Nature of it. Sermon I.

Secondly, To confirm the Truth of the Proposition.

Thirdly, Draw some Inferences from hence.

First, To settle and fix the true Notion of Faith, whereby we may come to understand the general Nature of it. I find that most who write upon this Subject have marvellously puzzled themselves with the various Acceptations of this word πίστις, and the verb πιστεύειν, insomuch that some have undertaken to enumerate above twenty distinct significations of this word. I cannot find so many, it may be others may: but hereby, instead of clearing the notion of Faith, they have involved it, and made it more intricate, and have made men believe, that it is a Notion very remote from common Understanding: whereas there is not any Word that is in common use, that is more plain and easie, and which any one may understand better than this of Faith and Believing.

Therefore

Therefore in the Explication of it, I ſhall attend to the uſe of it in common ſpeech, and in all Authors as well Prophane as Sacred; and I ſhall not guide my ſelf by Terms of Art, which have been received in the Schools, and have confounded the meaning of Words, by diſtorting them from the common and received uſe of them; but ſhall govern my ſelf by the nature of things to which this Word in common uſe is apply'd.

I ſhall remove two Acceptations of it which are leſs uſual, and then fix the common and general Notion of it, to which all the other more particular Significations may be referr'd. The two leſs uſual Acceptations are theſe.

Firſt, It is ſometimes put for the particular Grace or Virtue which is call'd Fidelity, or Faithfulneſs in our Promiſes and Contracts; and in this ſenſe it is ſometimes uſed in common Diſcourſe, and in all ſorts of Writers. I ſhall only mention a Text or two where it is ſo taken. *Matt.* 23. 23. *And have omitted the weightier things of the*

the law, judgment, and mercy, and faith, that is, *fidelity.* And *Rom.* 3. 3. with relation to God, *Shall their unbelief make the faith of God of none effect?* that is, his *faithfulneſs* in his Promiſes. *Tit.* 2. 10. *Not purloining, but ſhewing all good fidelity,* πίστιν πᾶσαν, *all Faith.* Sermon I.

Secondly, It is ſometimes put for ſpiritual Gifts, and particularly the Gift of Miracles, which were wrought by the power of Faith. *Rom.* 12. 3. *According as God hath dealt to every man the meaſure of faith*; that is, of ſpiritual Gifts, of *Propheſying*, or *Miniſtry*, or *Exhortation*, as it is explain'd afterward. 1 *Cor.* 12. 9. *To another is given faith by the ſame Spirit*, that is, a power of Miracles in general, as learned Interpreters think. Nor doth that which is added afterward, that *to another is given the working of miracles*, prejudice this Interpretation; for ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων, *the operation of powers*, which we render *of miracles*, ſeems to ſignifie ſome ſpecial ſort of Miracles, not the power of Miracles in general. And this ſeems to be favour'd by the acceptation of it in the next Chapter, *ver.* 2. *And though I have all faith, ſo that*

that I could remove Mountains; where Faith is undoubtedly taken for the power of Miracles.

Theſe being removed, as very alien and remote from the common and uſual Acceptation of the Word, I come now to fix the general Notion of Faith, to which all other Acceptations of it may eaſily be reduced; and 'tis this.

Faith is a Perſwaſion of the mind concerning any thing; concerning the truth of any Propoſition, concerning the Exiſtence, or Futurition, or Lawfulneſs, or Convenience, or Poſſibility, or Goodneſs of any thing, or the contrary; or concerning the Credit of a Perſon, or the contrary. And this notion is not only agreeable to the proper notion of the word πίστις, which comes from πείθω to perſwade, but is warranted from the common uſe of it in this latitude. It is ordinary for men to ſay, they believe or are perſwaded ſuch a Propoſition is true or falſe, ſuch a thing is or is not, ſuch an Event will be or will not be, that ſuch an Action is lawful or unlawful, ſuch a thing is good or bad, convenient or inconvenient,

nient, poſſible or impoſſible to be done; or that they believe ſuch a Perſon, or do not believe him. And I could ſhew from Scripture that *believing* is apply'd to all theſe matters, and many more; I will only inſtance in one or two. Sermon I.

That *Faith* is frequently uſed for the perſwaſion of the Truth of a Doctrine, or of the Veracity of God or Chriſt, I ſhall not need to produce any Texts, there are ſo many.

That *Faith* is uſed for a Perſwaſion of the lawfulneſs of an Action, the 14*th* Chap. to the *Romans* doth abundantly teſtifie. *Ver.* 2. *One believeth that he may eat all things*; that is, is perſwaded in his mind that all ſorts of Meat are lawful without diſtinction. *Ver.* 22. *Haſt thou faith?* that is, art thou perſwaded or ſatisfied in thy mind of the lawfulneſs of thoſe indifferent things he had been ſpeaking of. *Ver.* 23. *He that doubteth is damned if he eat, becauſe he eateth not of faith: for whatſoever is not of faith, is ſin*; that is, whatever is not done with the Perſwaſion and Satisfaction of our Minds that we may

Volume XII. lawfully do it, *is ſin.* I ſhall trouble you with no more Inſtances.

Now this being the general Notion of *Faith*, that it is a Perſwaſion of the Mind concerning any thing, from hence by a *Metonymy* it comes to be put for the Argument whereby this Perſwaſion is wrought in us. Hence it is, that among the Rhetoricians πίστις are any kind of Argument or Proof which Orators make uſe of to perſwade men; and there is one place in the New Teſtament, where πίστις ſeems to be uſed in this ſenſe, or very near it, *Acts* 17. 31. *Becauſe he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world*, &c. *whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead*, πίστιν παρεχὼν πᾶσιν, *having offer'd faith to all men*; that is, having given us this Argument for the proof of it, *that he raiſed Chriſt from the dead.*

Sometimes 'tis put for the Object of this Perſwaſion, or the matter or thing whereof we are perſwaded. And thus frequently in the New Teſtament, the Goſpel, which is the Object of our Faith, the thing which we believe, is call'd *Faith.*

Faith. And thus you find it uſed in that Phraſe of *Obedience to the faith*, that is, to the Goſpel, *Acts* 6. 7. *Rom.* 1. 5. 16. 26. And in this ſenſe Faith, that is the Goſpel, is frequently oppoſed to the Diſpenſation of the Law, *Rom.* 3. 27, 31. 10. 6. *Gal.* 1. 23. *He that perſecuted us in times paſt, now preacheth the faith which once he deſtroyed.* Gal. 3. 2. the *hearing of the Goſpel*, is call'd, *the hearing of faith*; ver. 23. *Before faith came*; and ver. 25. *But after that faith is come.* Eph. 4. 5. *There's one faith*, that is, one Goſpel, which we believe. 1 *Tim.* 4. 6. *Nouriſh'd up in the word of faith and of good doctrine.*

Sermon I.

The oppoſites to Faith are Unbelief and Credulity. Unbelief, which is a not being perſwaded of a thing, is the deficient extream; or doubting, if it prevail to a degree of Unbelief: and Credulity, which is an eaſineſs to believe things without any probable Argument to induce our perſwaſion, is the redundant extream.

The ſeat or ſubject of Faith is the Mind, or the Heart, as the Scripture uſually calls it. *With the heart man*

Volume XII.

believes, that is, with *the Soul*: for I do not underſtand any real diſtinction of Faculties; but if you will diſtinguiſh them, the proper ſeat of this perſwaſion is the Underſtanding; the immediate effect of it is upon the Will; by which it works upon the Affections, and the Life.

And *Faith* in this general Notion is not oppoſed to Error, and Knowledge, and Opinion: but comprehends all theſe under it. For if a Man be perſwaded of that which is falſe, he *believes a Lye*, as the Scripture expreſſeth it; a Man may be certainly perſwaded of a thing, that is, firmly believe it, which is *Knowledge*; a Man may be probably perſwaded of a thing, that is, believe it with ſome diffidence and uncertainty, and that is *Opinion.*

But for our better underſtanding of this general Notion of *Faith*, we will take into Conſideration theſe *Four* things.

I. The Cauſe of it, or the Argument whereby it is wrought.

II. The

II. The Degrees of it, and the difference of them. Sermon I.

III. The Natural Efficacy and Operation of it.

IV. The ſeveral Kinds of it.

I. We will conſider the Cauſe of Faith, or the Argument whereby it is wrought. Now all the Arguments whereby Faith may be wrought in us, that is a perſwaſion of any thing, will I think fall under one of theſe *Four* Heads; Senſe, Experience, Reaſon drawn from the thing, or the Authority and Teſtimony of ſome Perſon.

1. Senſe. Hence it is commonly ſaid that *ſeeing is believing*, that is, one of the beſt Arguments to perſwade us of any thing. That Faith may be wrought by this Argument, appears both from the Nature of the thing, nothing being more apt to perſwade us of any thing than our Senſes; and from ſeveral expreſſions in Scripture. I will inſtance in one for all, *Joh.* xx. 8.

Volume XII. *Then went in alſo the other Diſciple into the Sepulchre, and he ſaw, and believed.* And whereas Scripture oppoſeth Faith to Sight, as 2 *Cor.* v. 7. *We walk by Faith; and not by ſight*; Heb. xi. 15. *It is the evidence of things not ſeen*; we are to underſtand that only concerning a belief of the things of another World, which are Futurities, and inviſible, which the Apoſtle is there ſpeaking of; or of things which are of the ſame nature with theſe, as things paſt: not but that a Man may very well be induced to believe a thing by his Senſes.

2. Experience; which tho' it may be ſenſible, and then it is the ſame argument with Senſe; yet ſometimes it is not, and then it is an Argument diſtinct from it. As for Example, a Man may by experience be perſwaded or induced to believe this Propoſition, that his Will is free, that he can do this, or not do it; which is a better Argument than a Demonſtration to the contrary, if there could be one.

3. Rea-

Sermon I.

3. Reaſons drawn from the thing; which may either be neceſſary and concluding, or elſe only probable, and plauſible.

4. The Authority and Teſtimony of ſome Credible Perſon. Now two things give Authority and Credit to the Relation, or Teſtimony, or Aſſertion of a Perſon concerning any thing; Ability, and Integrity. Ability, if he can be preſumed to have a competent knowledge of what he relates, or aſſerts, or teſtifies; and Integrity, if he may be preſumed to be honeſt in his Relation, and free from any deſign, or will to deceive. And to theſe Heads, I think all Arguments of Belief may be reduc'd.

II. The *Second* Thing to be conſider'd is the Degrees of Faith, and the difference of them. And that there are Degrees I take for granted, tho' I ſhall afterwards have occaſion to prove it in a Divine Faith; and theſe depend perfectly upon the Capacity of the Perſon that believes, or is perſwaded. Now the Capacity, or Incapacity of

Volume XII.

Perſons are infinitely various, and not to be reduced to Theory; but ſuppoſing a competent capacity in the Perſon, then the Degrees of Faith or Perſwaſion take their difference from the Arguments, or Motives, or Inducements which are uſed to perſwade. Where Senſe is the Argument, there is the higheſt and firmeſt Degree of Faith, or Perſwaſion. Next to that is Experience, which is beyond any Argument or Reaſon from the thing. The Faith, or Perſwaſion which is wrought in us by Reaſons drawn from the thing, the Degrees of it are, as the Reaſons are: if they be neceſſary and concluding, it is firm and certain in its kind; if only probable, according to the degrees of probability, it hath more or leſs of doubting mix'd with it. Laſtly, the Faith which is wrought in us by Teſtimony or Authority of a Perſon, takes its degrees from the Credit of the Perſon, that is, his Ability, and Integrity. Now becauſe *all Men are Lyars*, that is, either may deceive, or be deceived, their Teſtimony partakes of their Infirmity, and ſo doth the degree of perſwaſion wrought by it: but

but God being both Infallible, and True, and conſequently it being impoſſible that he ſhould either deceive, or be deceived, his Teſtimony begets the firmeſt perſwaſion, and the higheſt degree of Faith in its kind. But then it is to be conſider'd, that there not being a revelation of a revelation *in infinitum*; that this is a Divine Teſtimony and Revelation, we can only have rational aſſurance; and the degree of the Faith, or perſwaſion which is wrought by a Divine Teſtimony will be according to the ſtrength of the Arguments which we have to perſwade us that ſuch a Teſtimony is Divine.

III. For the Efficacy or Operation of Faith, we are to conſider that the things we may believe or be perſwaded of, are of *two* ſorts. Either, 1. They are ſuch as do not concern me; and then the Mind reſts in a naked and ſimple belief of them, and a Faith or Perſwaſion of ſuch things has no effect upon me; but is apt to have, if ever it happen that the matter do concern me: Or elſe, 2. The thing I believe or am perſwaded

Volume XII.

ſwaded of doth concern me; and then it hath ſeveral Effects according to the nature of the thing I am perſwaded of, or the degree of the perſwaſion, or the capacity of the Perſon that believes or is perſwaded. If the thing believed be of great moment, the Effect of the Faith is proportionable, *cæteris paribus*; and ſo according to the degree of the perſwaſion: but if the Perſon be indiſpoſed to the proper Effects of ſuch a perſwaſion by the power of contrary habits, as it often happens, the Effect will be obtained with more difficulty, and may poſſibly be totally defeated, by caſting off the perſwaſion: for while it remains, it will operate and endeavour and ſtrive to work its proper effect. For Example, a Man may believe that Wine is very pernicious to him; and yet a ſtrong inclination to it may render it very difficult for this perſwaſion to work its proper effect upon him, which is to leave off Wine, and may at length wholly defeat it, by furniſhing him with ſome colour of Argument that may perſwade him otherwiſe.

IV. For

Sermon I.

IV. For the Kinds of Faith they are ſeveral, according to the variety of Objects or things believed. I ſhall reduce them all under theſe *two* General Heads.

1. Faith is either Civil or Humane, under which I comprehend the perſwaſion of things Moral, and Natural, and Political, and the like: Or,

2. Divine and Religious, that is, a perſwaſion of things that concern Religion. I know not whether theſe terms be proper, nor am I very ſolicitous, becauſe I know none fitter, and tell you what I mean by them.

The *firſt* kind of Faith concerning things Humane and Civil, I ſhall not ſpeak of, it being beſides my Deſign.

The *ſecond*, which I call a Religigious and Divine Faith, comprehends *three* things under it, which are diſtinctly to be conſider'd.

1. A perſwaſion of the Principles of Natural Religion, which are known by

Volume XII.

by the light of Nature, as the Existence of a God, the Immortality of the Soul, and a Future State.

2. A perſwaſion of things Supernatural, and Reveal'd.

3. A Perſwaſion of Supernatural Revelation. Theſe I deſign fully to handle. Thus I have prepar'd Materials for a large Diſcourſe; which tho' it be neceſſary, is, I am ſenſible, but too tedious, and yet poſſibly more tedious to me, than you.

SER-

SERMON II.

Of a Religious and Divine Faith.

The ſecond Sermon on this Text.

HEB. XI. 6.

But without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God.

IN my laſt Diſcourſe I came to treat of a Religious and Divine Faith, which, I told you, comprehends under it *three* things, which I now proceed to conſider diſtinctly.

Firſt, A Perſwaſion of the Principles of natural Religion, which are known by the light of Nature.

Secondly,

Secondly, A Perſwaſion of things ſupernatural and reveal'd.

Thirdly, A Perſwaſion of ſupernatural Revelation.

Firſt, A Perſwaſion of the Principles of natural Religion, ſuch as the light of Nature could diſcover; ſuch are the Exiſtence of God, the Immortality of the Soul, and a future State. The things to be enquired concerning this kind of Faith are theſe.

I. Whether this be truly and properly call'd Faith.

II. What are the Arguments whereby it is wrought.

III. Whether it admit of degrees or not, and what differences are obſervable in them.

IV. What are the proper and genuine Effects of it.

I. Whe-

V. In what ſenſe it may be ſaid to be *Divine* Faith.

I. Whether it may truly and properly be call'd Faith, or not? If the general Notion of Faith which I have fix'd before, *viz.* that it is a Perſwaſion of the Mind concerning any thing, be a true Notion of Faith, then there is no doubt but this may as properly be call'd Faith, as any thing can be; becauſe a man may be perſwaded in his mind concerning theſe things, that there is a God, that our Souls are immortal, that there is another State after this Life.

But beſides this, if the Scripture ſpeaks properly, as we have reaſon to believe it does, eſpecially when it treats profeſſedly of any thing, as the Apoſtle here does, then this queſtion is fully decided: for it is evident to any one that will but read this Verſe, out of which I have taken my Text, that the Apoſtle doth here in this place ſpeak of this kind of Faith, that is, a belief or perſwaſion of the Principles of Natural

Natural Religion. For after the Apoſtle had ſaid, that *Without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*; he immediately inſtanceth in the belief of the Principles of Natural Religion, as neceſſary to the pleaſing of God, that is, to make a Man Religious. *He that cometh to God, muſt believe that he is*; there is the Exiſtence of God, the firſt Principle of Natural Religion: *and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him*; which implies the other two, the Immortality of the Soul, and a Future State; for if good Men ſhall be Rewarded, there muſt be a Subject capable of ſuch Rewards, which brings in the Immortality of the Soul; and there muſt be a ſeaſon for theſe Rewards, which becauſe they are ſeldom beſtow'd in this World, there muſt be a Seaſon when they ſhall, which brings in a Future State after this Life. So that whoever denies that a perſwaſion of theſe Principles of Natural Religion may properly be called Faith, he quarrels with the Apoſtle, and does not correct me, but the Scriptures.

II. What

Sermon II.

II. What are the Arguments whereby this Faith or Perſwaſion of theſe Principles of Natural Religion is wrought? You may remember that I reduc'd all thoſe Arguments whereby any kind of Faith or Perſwaſion is wrought in us, to theſe *four* Heads; Senſe, Experience, Reaſons drawn from the Thing, and the Teſtimony or Authority of ſome Perſon. Now a Faith or Perſwaſion of theſe Principles cannot be wrought in us by Senſe: for *No Man hath ſeen God at any time*, and being a pure Spirit, he cannot be the object of any Corporeal Senſe. Nor can the Soul, or any mode of its Exiſtence, fall under any of our Senſes: nor a Future State; becauſe Senſe is only of things preſent. Nor can it be wrought in us meerly by Experience: for no Man can conclude from any thing he experienceth in himſelf, that there is a God, unleſs he be firſt perſwaded of it by other Arguments: and the Immortality of the Soul, and a Future State, are things which none in this Life can experience. Nor can the Authority or Teſtimony of any Perſon

Volume XII.

be the Argument that induceth that Perſwaſion. Not any Humane Authority: for theſe things are of ſuch Conſequence, and ſo much depends upon them, that is, the belief of them puts us upon ſo many things, which Men would not do if they did not believe them, as particularly the venturing of our Lives upon the account of Religion, and all our Worldly Intereſts, if occaſion call for it; that it were a fond thing to take Matters of ſuch Moment and Importance upon any Man's bare word, without other aſſurance of them. Nor can the Teſtimony or Authority of God be the Argument that perſwades me of the Exiſtence of a God. I grant that for the other two, the Immortality of the Soul, and a Future State, it is an excellent, and may be a ſufficient Argument. Tho' that theſe may be proved likewiſe by other Arguments without a Revelation, is evident in the Heathens, who by the Light of Nature did aſſent to them without a Revelation. But a Divine Revelation cannot poſſibly be an Argument inducing me to believe the Exiſtence of a God, for this plain Reaſon; be-

cauſe

cauſe a Divine Revelation can be no Argument to any that is not perſwaded that it is a Divine Revelation: but before I can be perſwaded that any Revelation is from God, I muſt be perſwaded there is a God; and if ſo, there is no need of this Argument to prove to me that there is one: and therefore you do not find it any where reveal'd in all the Scripture, that there is a God. The Scripture often declares that *Jehovah* is *the true and living God*, and that *beſides him there is no other*: but it doth not reveal, but every where ſuppoſe, that there is one.

It remains then that it muſt be another kind of Argument whereby we muſt be perſwaded of the Exiſtence of a God, and that is by ſuch Reaſons as may be drawn from things themſelves to perſwade us hereof; as either from the Notion and Idea which we have of a God, that he is a Being that hath all Perfections, whereof neceſſary Exiſtence is one, and conſequently that he muſt be; or elſe from the Univerſal conſent of all Nations, and the gene-

Volume XII.

rality of Perſons agreeing in this apprehenſion, which cannot be attributed reaſonably to any other Cauſe, than to impreſſions ſtamp'd upon our Underſtandings by God himſelf; or (which is moſt plain of all) from this viſible frame of the World, which we cannot, without great violence to our Underſtandings, impute to any other Cauſe than a being Endow'd with infinite Goodneſs, and Power, and Wiſdom, which is that we call *God.*

As for the other two Principles of Natural Religion, the Immortality of the Soul, and a Future State; after we believe a God, we may be perſwaded of theſe from Divine Revelation; and that doth give us the higheſt and firmeſt aſſurance of them in the Reſurrection of Chriſt from the Dead. Yet I do not find but that theſe alſo are rather ſuppos'd, than expreſly reveal'd in the Bible. Indeed the Immortality of the Soul may be infer'd from ſeveral places of Scripture, and the tenour of the whole Bible: and ſo a Future State, which, as for the thing it ſelf, ſeems to be ſuppoſed as a thing

a thing acknowledged by Natural Light; only the Scripture hath reveal'd the circumſtances of it more particularly to us, and given us higher aſſurance of the thing: but if there were no Revelation, Men might be perſwaded of theſe; and ſo the Heathens were by Arguments drawn partly from the operations of the Soul, which would almoſt perſwade any Man that the Soul is Immortal; it being altogether unimaginable how a Principle that is nothing elſe but Matter, can either underſtand, or determine it ſelf by its own Will; all the motions of Matter that we know of, or can imagine, being neceſſary: and partly from the Juſtice and Goodneſs of God. The conſideration of God's Goodneſs would perſwade a Man, that as he made all things very good, ſo he made them of the longeſt duration they were capable of: and the Juſtice of God would eaſily induce a Man to believe, ſeeing the Providence of God doth generally in this Life deal promiſcuouſly with good and bad Men, that there ſhall be a Day which will

Volume XII.

make a difference, and every Man ſhall receive according to his works.

But I do not intend to inſiſt upon theſe Arguments; all that I deſign, is, to ſhew what kind of Arguments do work a Faith and Perſwaſion in Men concerning theſe Principles of Natural Religion: and they are Reaſons drawn from the thing.

And it is not always neceſſary to the working of this Faith and Perſwaſion, that theſe Reaſons ſhould neceſſarily, yea or truly conclude the Principle to be believed: if they do it probably, and it appear ſo to me, it is enough to beget a perſwaſion in me of ſuch a thing. There are many Men entertain the greateſt Truths, and are firmly perſwaded of them, upon an incompetent Argument, and ſuch as might perſwade them of any thing elſe as well; and ſuch Perſons, if they have Capacity and Underſtanding, they are rather Happy than Wiſe in their Religion. It falls out well that they happen to be in the right; for they might have been in the wrong upon the ſame terms. But if the

the Perſons who believe the Principles of Religion upon inſufficient Arguments, and their belief have a real effect upon them, as it will if it be true and permanent; if they be Ignorant, and ſuch as want the ordinary advantages of improving their knowledge, they are wiſe enough; that is, they are as wiſe as God's Providence hath made them, and the Circumſtances of their Education, and the Condition of their Life will let them be. Sermon II.

The III. thing to be enquir'd is, Whether this Faith or Perſwaſion of the Principles of Natural Religion admit degrees, or not? and what differences are obſervable in them? That it does admit degrees, that is, that a Man may be more or leſs perſwaded of the Truth of theſe Principles, is evident from the Heathens; ſome of whom did yield a more firm and unſhaken aſſent to them; others entertain'd them with a more faint perſwaſion of them, eſpecially of the Immortality of the Soul, and a Future State, about which moſt of them had many qualms and doubts. Of all

Volume XII.

the Heathens, *Socrates* ſeems to have had the trueſt and firmeſt perſwaſion of theſe things; which he did not only teſtifie in words; but by the Conſtancy, and Calmneſs, and ſedate Courage which he manifeſted at his Death. Indeed in his Diſcourſe before his Death, he ſays, "He did "not know whether his Soul ſhall re-"main after his Body, and whether "there be a Happineſs reſerv'd for "good Men in another World: but he "thought ſo, and had ſuch hopes of "it, that he was very willing to ven-"ture his Life upon theſe hopes. Which words, tho' they ſeem to be ſpoke doubtingly, as the manner of the *Academy* was; yet conſidering his manner of ſpeaking, which was modeſt, and not peremptory and dogmatical, they ſignifie as great a confidence as he had of any thing, and they are high expreſſions of aſſurance. For we may believe that the Man who dies for any thing, how modeſtly ſoever he may expreſs himſelf, is very well aſſured of the truth of it. So that this Faith and Perſwaſion admits of degrees, the difference whereof is to be reſolv'd partly into the capacity

city of the Perſons who believe: and partly into the ſtrength, or at leaſt appearance of ſtrength in the Arguments whereby it is wrought. Sermon II.

The IV. thing to be enquir'd is, What are the proper and genuine effects of this Faith or Perſwaſion? Now *that* in a word is Natural Religion, which conſiſts in apprehenſions of God ſuitable to his Nature, and affections towards him ſuitable to theſe apprehenſions, and actions ſuitable to both. He that believes there is ſuch a Being in the World as God, that is, one infinitely Good, and Wiſe, and Powerful, and Juſt, and Holy, and (in a word) cloathed with all Excellency, will have a great eſteem and reverence for him, and love to him, which he will teſtifie in thoſe outward expreſſions of reſpect which we call Worſhip. He that believes that this Being is the Original of all good, that he made the World, and all the Creatures in it, and preſerves and governs them, he will depend upon him, and ſeek to him for every good thing, and acknowledge him for the Author of them; which brings in Prayer

Volume XII.

Prayer and Thanksgiving. He that believes that he owes his being to God, and all the bleſſings of his Life, will think it reaſonable that he ſhould be at his diſpoſal, will be willing to be govern'd by his Laws, and ready to ſubmit to his pleaſure; which brings in Obedience and Submiſſion to the Will of God. He that believes there is another Life after this, wherein Men ſhall be Rewarded or Puniſh'd, according as they have demeaned themſelves well or ill in this World, he will be encourag'd to Piety and Virtue, and afraid to do any thing which his own reaſon tells him is diſpleaſing to the Deity, as he cannot but believe every thing is, that is contrary to the Nature of God, or the perfection of his own Nature, or the good order and happineſs of the World; which brings in Temperance, and Juſtice, and all other real Virtues. And that the belief of theſe Principles had this effect upon ſeveral of the Heathens, to make them in a good degree Religious and Virtuous, I doubt not the Moral and Honeſt Lives of many of them give real teſtimony of this

which Natural Religion and Morality of theirs, how far it may avail them for their good, we are not concern'd to determine. This we are ſure of, that it will make their Condition more tolerable in another World; and if they fall under condemnation, it will mitigate and allay their miſery. Sermon I.

V. In what Senſe this Faith or Perſwaſion of the Principles of Natural Religion may be ſaid to be Divine? In theſe *two* reſpects.

1. In reſpect of the Object of it, or Matters to be believed, which are Divine, and do immediately concern Religion, in oppoſition to that which I call a Civil and Humane Faith, which is of ſuch things as do not immediately concern God and Religion.

2. In reſpect of the Divine Effects of it, which are to make Men Religious, and like God. And a Faith may as properly be ſaid to be Divine in reſpect of the Object of it, as in reſpect of the Argument whereby

Volume XII.

by it is wrought: ſo that a Faith of the Principles of Natural Religion is as truly Divine, tho' it be not wrought in us by the Arguments of Divine Teſtimony and Authority, as a Faith of the Matters of Divine Revelation contain'd in the Holy Scriptures: for why a Faith may not as well be ſaid to be Divine for its relation to God as the Object of it, as for its relation to the Teſtimony of God as the Cauſe of it, I cannot underſtand.

Secondly, The *Second* ſort of Faith, which I call Divine or Religious, is a perſwaſion of things Supernaturally Reveal'd, of things which are not known by Natural Light, but by ſome more immediate manifeſtation and diſcovery from God. Thus we find our Saviour, *Matth.* xvi. 15, 16, 17. oppoſeth Divine Revelation to the diſcovery of Natural Reaſon and Light. He asks his Diſciples whom they believed him to be, *Whom ſay ye that I am? And Simon Peter anſwer'd and ſaid, Thou art the Chriſt*, (that is, the *Meſſias*) *the Son of the living God. And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid*

Sermon II.

ſaid unto him, Bleſſed art thou Simon Bar-jona; for fleſh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee; but my Father which is in Heaven; where a Revelation or Diſcovery from Fleſh and Blood, is oppoſed to a Revelation from God, *Fleſh and Blood* being a Hebrew Phraſe or manner of ſpeaking, ſignifying a meer Man, or ſomething meerly Humane. So we find the Phraſe uſed, *Eph.* vi. 12. *We wreſtle not againſt Fleſh and Blood; but againſt Principalities, and Powers, and Spiritual Wickedneſs*; that is, the Enemies we are to contend with, are not only Men, but Devils; and which is nearer to our purpoſe, *Gal.* i. 16. where the Apoſtle would expreſs to us, that he receiv'd not his Commiſſion from Men; but immediately from the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*; he tells us, that *when it pleaſed God, who ſeparated him from his Mothers womb, and called him by his grace, to reveal his Son in him, that he might Preach him among the Heathen, immediately he conferred not with Fleſh and Blood*; the word is προσανεθέμην, *I did not apply my ſelf to Fleſh and Blood*; that is, I did not go to Men to receive my

Volume XII.

my Commiſſion from them: for ſo he explains it in the next words, *Neither went I up to* Jeruſalem, *to them that were Apoſtles before me*; that is, I did not apply my ſelf to the Apoſtles, to derive any Authority from them to preach the Goſpel, becauſe he had no need of that, being called immediately by Chriſt to this Work; which words are nothing elſe but a farther explication of what he had ſaid before, *ver.* 11, 12. *I certifie you Brethren, that the Goſpel which was preach'd by me, is not after Man: for I neither receiv'd it of Man, neither was taught it, but by the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt.* So accordingly here our Saviour tells *Peter* that this truth, *That Chriſt was the Meſſias, the Son of the living God was not revealed to him by Man,* no by any meer Humane Principle or Teſtimony, *but by his Father which was in Heaven*; that is, by the Teſtimony which God himſelf gave of him in the Holy and Divine Goſpel which he taught, and thoſe Miracles which he wrought in confirmation of it.

So that this kind of Faith is a perſwaſion of ſuch things as are not know

b

by Natural Light, nor diſcover'd to us by Men; but ſome way or other reveal'd by God; I ſay ſome way or other; for the ways of God's revealing and manifeſting himſelf to us are various, and arbitrary. God may chuſe what ways he pleaſeth to diſcover himſelf to us by. So the Apoſtle tells us, *Heb.* i. 1. *God, who at ſundry times, and in divers manners ſpake in times paſt unto the Fathers by the Prophets.* God revealed himſelf as *at ſeveral times*, by ſeveral *ſteps* and *degrees*: ſo *in various manners*; ſometimes by Viſions, ſometimes by Dreams, ſometimes by Oracles, ſometimes by a Spirit of Prophecy, and ſometimes by a Voice from Heaven, ſometimes by a ſecret and gentle Inſpiration. Now it matters not which of theſe ways God chuſeth to reveal himſelf to us, provided we have ſufficient Evidence and ground of Aſſurance that the thing is revealed by God.

Sermon I.

As to us theſe extraordinary ways of Revelation are now ceaſed, and we have a fix'd and ſtanding Revelation, that is, the Records of thoſe Revelations which God formerly made

to

to Holy Men; and this is the Holy Scriptures, or the Bible, which is a Syſtem or Collection of things Supernaturally reveal'd.

Now if this Faith be conſider'd as reſtrain'd to a part of Divine Revelation, *viz.* the Doctrine of the Goſpel, reveal'd to the World by *Jeſus Chriſt*, then it is properly *Chriſtian Faith*, which frequently in the New Teſtament is call'd *Faith* κατ' ἐξοχὴν, by way of excellency and eminency, this being the moſt eminent and perfect Revelation which God hath made of himſelf to the World, which the Apoſtle at the beginning of this Epiſtle advanceth above all thoſe former Revelations which God had made of himſelf to the Fathers, thoſe being by his Servants and Miniſters, Prophets and Angels: *But in theſe laſt days God hath revealed himſelf to us by his Son, whom he hath made Heir of all things*, and advanced to a Dignity above that of Men or Angels.

And with relation to this *Faith* of the Goſpel, Chriſtians are peculiarly and

and eminently call'd *believers*. 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 10. *You know how unblameably we behaved our ſelves among you that believe*, that is, among you Chriſtians. 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 10. *When he ſhall come to be glorified in his ſaints, and admired in all them that believe*, meaning the Chriſtians that entertain'd the Goſpel. And upon the ſame account the Apoſtle calls the whole Society, or Body of Chriſtians, *the houſhold of faith*, Gal. 6. 10. Sermon II.

But now I am conſidering *Faith*, not in this more narrow and reſtrained ſenſe, for a Belief or Perſwaſion of the Doctrine of the Goſpel; but in a more large and comprehenſive ſenſe, for a perſwaſion of all things that are ſupernaturally revealed, that is, of all things contained in the Holy Scriptures.

Now all the matters of Divine Revelation, which are contained in the Book of Holy Scripture, may, I think, be reduced to one of theſe *ſix* heads.

1. They are either a Hiſtory, or Relation of ſome perſon, or matter of fact: and a *Faith* of the hiſtorical part of Scripture, is nothing elſe but a Perſwaſion

Volume XII.

ſwaſion that thoſe narrations, or relations are true. Or,

2. A Propheſie, or Prediction of ſome event. Now a *Faith* of the Prophetical part of Scripture, is a Perſwaſion that the Event foretold will certainly come to paſs. Or,

3. A Doctrine. Such as are all thoſe Propoſitions in Scripture which declare to us the Nature or Properties of God, the Nature and Office of Chriſt, that he is the eternal Son of God, that is, true God, the *Meſſias*, or Saviour of the world, the King, Prieſt, and Prophet of his Church, and the like. Now a *Faith* of the Doctrinal part of Scripture, is a Perſwaſion that thoſe Propoſitions, which contain thoſe Doctrines, are true. Or,

4. Laws for the Ordering and Governing of our Spirits and Lives, under which I comprehend all the Precepts and Prohibitions of Scripture, which are the matter of our duty. Now a *Faith* of theſe, is a Perſwaſion, that God hath Commanded, and Forbidden ſuch things; and conſequently

Sermon II.

ſequently that they are neceſſary to be obſerved by us. Or,

5. Promiſes of good things, either with relation to this life, or the other. Now a *Faith* of the Promiſes is a Perſwaſion, or Confident expectation that they will be accompliſh'd. And thus the Apoſtle deſcribes the Faith of the Promiſes of another World, at the 1ſt *ver.* of this Chapter, that it is the *ſubſtance of things hoped for*, ὑπόστασις, that is, *a confident expectation* that the Promiſes of the Goſpel, which are the matter of our hope, ſhall be accompliſh'd; *and the evidence of things not ſeen*, a being convinced of the certainty and reality of future and inviſible things. And thus likewiſe the Apoſtle explains to us the Faith of *Abraham*, in reference to the Promiſes of God to give him a ſon, *Rom.* 4. 21. *He was fully perſwaded, that what God had promiſed he was able perform.* Or,

6. Threatnings. Now a *Faith* of the Threatnings, is a Perſwaſion of the danger we incurr, if we neglect our

our duty; that is, a Belief that God juſtly may, and will (having confirmed his threatnings with Oath, which is a ſign of the immutable determination of the Divine Will) inflict thoſe Puniſhments upon us, which he hath threatned, in caſe we diſobey his laws. Theſe *ſix* heads do, I think, contain all, I am ſure the moſt Principal matters of Divine Revelation; which I have the more carefully diſtinguiſh'd, becauſe ſome of them are of a diſtinct and peculiar Conſideration from the reſt, as will afterwards appear.

Having thus, as plainly and briefly as I could, opened to you, what I mean by this *ſecond* ſort of Divine Faith, which is a Perſwaſion of things Supernaturally revealed, I now come to ſatiſfie ſuch enquiries about this, as may be moſt material. And here I ſhall proceed upon thoſe heads of enquiry which I handled when I ſpake of the *firſt* ſort of Divine Faith.

I. Whether this may truly and properly be call'd *Faith?*

II. What

Sermon II.

II. What is the Argument whereby this Faith is wrought?

III. Whether it admit of Degrees, and what are the Differences of them?

IV. What are the proper and genuin Effects of this Faith?

V. In what Reſpects it may be ſaid to be *Divine*?

I. Whether this may truly and properly be call'd *Faith*? And that it may, is evident, becauſe the general definition of *Faith* agrees to it: for a Man may be perſwaded in his mind concerning things ſupernaturally revealed; and the Scripture every where calls a perſwaſion of theſe matters, by the name of *Faith*. But beſides this, it ſeems this is the adequate and only Notion of *Faith*, as it hath been fixt by the Schools, and is become a Term of Art. For the definition that the Schools give of *Faith* is this; that it is *an aſſent to a thing credible, as credible*. Now, ſay they, that is *Credible* which

Volume XII.

relies upon the Teſtimony of a credible Perſon; and conſequently a *Human Faith* is that which relies upon human Teſtimony; and a *Divine Faith*, that which relies upon the Teſtimony or Authority of God: which Definition, tho' it be ſhort and imperfect, (being indeed not a Definition of *Faith* in general, but of a particular kind of *Faith*, *viz.* that which is wrought by the Argument which we call *Teſtimony* or *Authority*, and conſequently excludes a belief of the Principles of natural Religion, and a belief that the Scriptures are the word of God, from being *Faith*: yet this ſhews thus much, that all agree in this, that a Perſwaſion of things ſupernaturally revealed, is truly and properly *Faith*.

II. What is the Argument whereby this Faith, or Perſwaſion of things Supernaturally revealed is wrought in us? And this, by the general conſent of all, is the Teſtimony or Authority of God, ſome way or other revealing theſe things to us; whoſe infallible and unerring Knowledge, together with his Goodneſs and Authority, gives us the higheſt aſſurance, that he neither can

can be deceived himſelf, nor will deceive us in any thing that he reveals to us. I ſay the Teſtimony or Authority of God ſome way or other revealing things to us, is the Argument whereby a Faith of any ſupernatural Revelation is wrought in us: but if we reſtrain all ſupernatural Revelations to the Bible, as I told you we know of no other, then the particular kind of Teſtimony whereby this Faith is wrought in us, is the written Word of God. Sermon II.

III. As to the degrees of this Faith. Suppoſing men ſufficiently ſatisfied that the Scriptures are the Word of God, that is, a Divine Revelation; then all thoſe who are ſufficiently ſatisfied of this, do equally believe the things contained in the Scriptures. For if men be once fully ſatisfied that God hath ſpoken any thing, I think no Man makes the leaſt doubt but what God ſays is true. Now there can be no Degrees of Faith, where there is no doubt of the contrary; all the Degrees that are in Faith, ariſing from a greater or leſs mixture of doubting. So that thoſe who do not at all doubt

Volume XII.

but that the Scriptures are the Word of God, have the ſame Degree of Perſwaſion concerning the matters contained in them: and that no Man doubts whether what God ſays is true, ariſeth from the fix'd and conſtant Notion which men univerſally have of God, that he is infallible and true. Therefore we find, *Matt.* 21. 25. when our Saviour puts the *Dilemma* to the Phariſees, concerning the Baptiſm of *John*, *Whether it were from heaven, or of men?* that *they reaſoned with themſelves, ſaying, If we ſhall ſay, from heaven; he will ſay unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?* Which kind of reaſoning imports thus much, that it is univerſally acknowledged, that no Man can in reaſon make the leaſt doubt of that which he believes to be from God. Therefore a Man would wonder what *Betanus* the *Jeſuit* meant, unleſs it were to abuſe the Prophets and Apoſtles, when he ſays, *Tom.* 3. of his *School-Divinity*, that the Prophets and Apoſtles had *evedentiam revelationis, non autem evidentiam primæ veritatis: tametſi enim evidenter cognoſcerent Deum eſſe, qui ipſis revelabat myſteria fidei;*

fidei, non tamen evidenter cognoſcebant Deum eſſe ſummè veracem, qui nec falli potuit, nec fallere; that is, "Tho' "it was ſufficiently evident to the "Prophets and Apoſtles, that thoſe "Revelations which they had were "from God; yet it was not evi- "dent to them, that Divine Re- "velations are true: for tho' they "did evidently know that there was "a God, who revealed to them "the myſteries of Faith; yet they did "not evidently know that God was "infallible and true, who could nei- "ther deceive, nor be deceived. By which he doth not only make the Prophets and Apoſtles Ideots, and deſtitute of one of the moſt common notions of human Nature, which is, *that God is infallible and true*; but he doth likewiſe make all Divine Revelation uſeleſs, and to no purpoſe. For to what purpoſe is it for a Man to be ſatisfied that God reveals ſuch a thing to him; if he be in the mean time unſatisfied, whether what God reveals is true? for no man that is unſatisfied, whether what God reveals be true, can upon any tolerable ground of reaſon yield a firm aſſent to a Divine Revelation.

Volume XII.

velation. But 'tis pity to ſpend time in confuting any thing which confutes it ſelf by its own abſurdity, and its direct contradiction to the common notions of human Nature. I proceed therefore.

Suppoſing any Man be unſatisfied, and do make any doubt whether theſe Books call'd the Holy Scriptures, or any of them, be the Word of God, that is, a Divine Revelation; proportionably to the degree of his doubting concerning the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, there will be an abatement of his Faith, as to the things contained in them: for he that believes a thing meerly upon the Credit or Teſtimony of ſuch a Perſon; ſo much reaſon as he hath to doubt, whether ſuch a Perſon did ſpeak, or teſtifie ſuch a thing; ſo much reaſon he hath to doubt whether the thing be true.

And upon this account I think it is, that the Scripture ſpeaks of Degrees of Faith, of growing and increaſing in Faith, of a ſtrong Faith, that is, ſuch

ſuch a Faith, as was either wholly, or in a great meaſure free from doubting; and of a weak Faith, that is, ſuch a Faith, as had a great mixture of doubting; by which we are not to underſtand, that they doubted of the Truth of any thing of which they were Satisfied by a Divine revelation; but that they doubted whether ſuch things were Divine revelations, or not. So that the great doubt of the Diſciples was, whether Chriſt were the true *Meſſias*, and really the Son of God: for ſo far as they were ſatisfied of that, they could not doubt of any thing he ſaid. Sermon II.

IV. What are the proper and genuin Effects of this *Faith?* The proper and genuin Effects of the Belief of the Scriptures in general, is the Conformity of our Hearts and Lives to what we believe; that is, to be ſuch Perſons, and to live ſuch Lives as it becomes thoſe, who do heartily believe, and are really perſwaded of the truth of the Scriptures. And if this be a conſtant and abiding peſwaſion, it will produce this Effect; but with more or leſs difficulty, according to the diſpoſition of the Subject, and the weakneſs or ſtrength of

Volume XII.

of contrary habits and inclinations. More particularly the Effects of this Faith are according to the Nature of the matter believed. If it be a Hiſtory or relation of things paſt, or Prophecy of things to come; it hath an Effect upon men ſo far as the Hiſtory or Prophecy doth concern them. If it be a doctrine; it hath the Effect which the particular nature and tendency of ſuch a Doctrine requires. For inſtance, the doctrine of Gods goodneſs is apt to inflame us with Love to him; of his Power and Juſtice, with a fear and awe of him. This Doctrine, that Chriſt is the Saviour of the World, the proper Effect of it, is to make men rely upon him for Salvation; and ſo of the reſt. If it be a Precept; the proper Effect of it, is obedience: and hence it is that unbelief and diſobedience are frequently put for one another in Scripture; and diſobedience is oppoſed to Faith, 1 *Pet.* 2. 7. *Unto you therefore which believe, he his precious: but unto them which be diſobedient*, &c. where *the diſobedient* are oppoſed to *them that believe*. And ſo likewiſe thoſe who neglect any duty of of Religion, and do any thing notoriouſly unworthy of their Profeſſion, are ſaid to

deny

deny the Faith, 1 Tim. 5. 8. *But if any provide not for his own, and ſpecially for thoſe of his own houſe, he hath denied the faith.* How does he *deny the Faith*? In diſobeying the Precepts of the Chriſtian Religion, which chargeth us with ſuch Natural and Moral Dutys. If it be a Promiſe; the proper Effect of it is, encouragement to Obedience by hopes of the thing Promiſed. If a Threatning; the proper Effect of it is to reſtrain men from ſin and diſobedience. Sermon II.

V. In what ſenſe this Faith of things ſupernaturally revealed, may be ſaid to be a *Divine Faith*? Anſw. not only in reſpect of the Matter and Object of it, which are Divine things, ſuch as concern God and Religion; and in reſpect of the Divine Effects it hath upon thoſe who believe theſe things; (for in theſe two reſpects a Perſwaſion of the Principles of natural Religion, may be ſaid to be a *Divine Faith*:) but likewiſe in reſpect of the Argument whereby it is wrought, which is a Divine Teſtimony. As for the efficient cauſe, the Spirit of God, that does not immediately

Volume XII

diately belong to this: for the Spirit of God doth not, ſpeaking properly, perſwade us immediately of the truth of things Supernaturally revealed; but mediately by perſwading us of the truth of the Revelation: for to believe a thing to be true, which we are perſwaded is Revealed by God, is ſo natural and conſequent upon ſuch a Perſwaſion, that it doth not ſeem to require any new work of the Spirit. And if this be all the work of the Spirit, to perſwade men that ſuch a Revelation is Divine; it will be moſt proper to ſpeak of this, when I come to the *Third* ſort of Faith, which is a perſwaſion of a Divine Revelation, that it is ſuch; which becauſe it hath many difficulties in it, it deſerves a more large and particular conſideration.

SER-

Sermon
I.

SERMON III.

Of the Faith or Perſwaſion of a Divine Revelation.

The third Sermon on this Text.

HEB. XI. 6.

But without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God.

I Have obſerv'd that a *Religious* and *Divine Faith* comprehends under it *three* things.

Firſt, a Perſwaſion of the Principles of Natural Religion, which are known by the light of Nature.

Secondly,

Secondly, A perſwaſion of things Supernatural, and Reveal'd.

Thirdly, A Perſwaſion of Supernatural Revelation.

The *two* former of theſe I have conſider'd, and now proceed to the

Third ſort of Faith, which I call *Divine*, or *Religious*; *viz.* a Perſwaſion concerning a Divine Revelation, that is ſuch; which I diſtinguiſh from the former thus. The former is a Perſwaſion concerning the things which are revealed from God, that they are true: this is a Perſwaſion concerning the Revelation it ſelf, that it is Divine and from God.

For the opening of this there are many things to be taken into conſideration.

I. What we underſtand by a Divine Revelation.

II. The ſeveral Kinds of it.

III. The

III. Whether a Perſwaſion concerning a Divine Revelation be properly *Faith.* Sermon III.

IV. How we may come to be aſſured of a Divine Revelation, or by what Arguments a Faith or Perſwaſion of a Divine Revelation is wrought in us.

V. The Degrees of this Perſwaſion or Aſſurance.

VI. The Effects of it.

VII. In what ſenſe it may be ſaid to be a *Divine Faith*; under which I ſhall ſpeak ſomething concerning the Teſtimony of the Spirit.

I. What we are to underſtand by a Divine Revelation. *Anſw.* A Supernatural diſcovery, or manifeſtation of things to us. I ſay ſupernatural, becauſe it may either be immediately by God, or by the mediation of Angels; as moſt, if not all of the Revelations of the Old Teſtament were; a

Volume XII.

ſupernatural Diſcovery, or Manifeſtation, either immediately to our minds, and inward faculties; (for I do not ſo well underſtand the diſtinction between *Underſtanding* and *Imagination*, as to be careful to take notice of it;) or elſe mediately to our underſtandings, by the mediation of our outward Senſes, as by an external appearance to our bodily eyes, or by a voice and ſound to the ſenſe of hearing. But of this I have diſcours'd in a former *Sermon*, * and therefore ſhall add no more here.

* See Vol. 5. Serm. 11.

II. For the ſeveral kinds of Divine Revelation; of this alſo I have formerly * diſcours'd at large.

* See Vol. 5. Serm. 11.

III. Whether a Perſwaſion of a Divine Revelation may properly be call'd *Faith*? To this I anſwer, That according to the ſtreight and narrow notion of Faith, which the Schools have fix'd, which is an aſſent to any thing grounded upon the Teſtimony, and Authority of God revealing it, a Perſwaſion of a Divine Revelation cannot properly be call'd Faith; becauſe it is irrational to

to expect that a man ſhould have another Divine Revelation to aſſure him, that this is a Divine Revelation: for then for the ſame reaſon, I muſt expect another Divine Revelation to aſſure me of that, and ſo without end. But I have ſufficiently ſhewn, that this is not the true notion of Faith in general, but only of a particular kind of Faith; *viz.* that which is wrought by the Argument, which we call Teſtimony, or Authority. But according to the true and general notion of Faith, which is *a perſwaſion of the mind concerning any thing*, a perſwaſion of the mind concerning a Divine Revelation, may as properly be call'd *Faith*, as any thing elſe, if men will but grant, that a man may be ſo ſatisfied, concerning a Divine Revelation, as verily to believe and be perſwaded that it is ſo. Sermon III.

IV. How we may come to be perſwaded of a Divine Revelation, that it is ſuch; or by what Arguments this Perſwaſion is wrought in us? For anſwer to this, it will be requiſite diſtinctly to conſider,

Volume XII.

Firſt, The Perſons to whom a Divine Revelation is immediately made, what aſſurance they can have of it. And,

Secondly, What aſſurance other perſons can have of it. I ſay, theſe are diſtinctly to be conſider'd, becauſe there is a very different account to be given of them.

Firſt, As to thoſe perſons, to whom the Revelation is immediately made, the queſtion is, By what Arguments or Means they may come to be aſſured, that any Revelation, which they have, is really and truly ſuch, and not a Deluſion or Impoſture. The *Jewiſh* Doctors tell us, that ſome kind of Divine Revelations do not carry full aſſurance along with them, that they are Divine; ſuch are Dreams and Viſions, as they are diſtinguiſh'd from Prophecy: and as to that kind of Revelation, which they ſtrictly call Prophecy, they give ſeveral characteriſtical notes to diſtinguiſh true Divine Revelation from deluſion; ſuch as theſe; that the ſpirit of deluſion only works upon

on the imagination, and the lower Faculties; the Divine Spirit of Prophecy upon the underſtanding and reaſonable part of the Soul: that deluſive Inſpirations were accompanied with alienation of mind, which did diſcover it ſelf either in *Rage* and *Fury*, or *Melancholy*; but the true Prophetical Spirit is always conſiſtent with the uſe of reaſon and underſtanding. They diſtinguiſh them likewiſe by the manner of their ſeiſing upon them; that in the beginning of Inſpirations the Prophets uſed to have ſome apparition, or to hear ſome voice, either articulate in Words, or inarticulate by Thunder, or the ſound of a Trumpet, which in the *Revelations* doth frequently precede St. *John*'s Viſions; and by theſe they were aſſured that they were Divine. And laſtly; that a Divine Inſpiration did always carry along with it a ſtrong Evidence of its original, and that by the vigour and ſtrength of its impreſſion, they were fully aſſured and ſatisfied beyond all doubt and heſitation. Thus they. But all that I ſhall ſay by way of Anſwer to this Queſtion, ſhall be in theſe *two* Propoſitions. Sermon III.

Volume XII.

1. If we believe any ſuch thing, as Divine Revelation, we cannot doubt but thoſe who have it, are ſome way or other fully ſatisfied of it. The Reaſon is evident; becauſe otherwiſe it would be in vain, and to no purpoſe, and could not poſſibly attain its end. A Divine Revelation connot poſſibly ſignifie any thing, or in reaſon have any effect upon a man, unleſs he be ſatisfied it is ſuch: for ſo long as he does not know but that it is a deluſion, he will not attend to it, or regard it. So that the diſtinction of the *Jewiſh* Doctors between Dreams, and Viſions, and Prophecy, that this carries always full aſſurance with it, the other not, is vain and unreaſonable.

2. The means whereby this aſſurance of a Divine Revelation is wrought, is moſt probably the evidence it carries along with it, whereby it did fully ſatisfie the perſon that had it of its Divine Original. That God can accompany his own Revelations with ſuch a clear and overpowering Light as ſhall diſcover

ver to us the Divinity of them, and ſatisfie us beyond all doubt and ſcruple, I think no man can doubt, that conſiders the vaſt Power and Influence which he muſt needs have over our Underſtandings, who made them, and knows the frame of them: And if this be granted, it is not neceſſary to explain the particular way, how it is done, it being a thing not to be expreſt in words, but to be felt and experienced. So that the Argument, whereby this perſwaſion of a Divine Revelation is wrought in thoſe that have it, is inward Experience of the full Satisfaction and Aſſurance, which they find to be ſupernaturally wrought in them, that is, of which they can give no account from themſelves. And this is not a ſtubborn belief, and an obſtinate conceit of a thing: but a good man, who is inſpired, when he reflects upon himſelf, and this aſſurance which he finds in himſelf, he can give a rational account of it to himſelf. Thus he finds that it is a foreign impreſſion, and doth not ſpring from himſelf, nor hath its riſe from thence; therefore Sermon III.

Volume XII.

he aſcribes it to ſome Spirit without himſelf; and he believes that there is a God that can communicate himſelf to the minds and ſpirits of men; and that his Goodneſs is ſuch, that he will not ſuffer them to be under a neceſſity of deluſion, which they muſt be, if when they have the higheſt aſſurance and ſatisfaction, that ſuch a thing is a Divine Revelation, they may be deceived. And then likewiſe he conſiders the matter of the Revelation, which if it do not contradict any eſſential and neceſſary fundamental notion of his underſtanding, he thinks himſelf bound to entertain it upon this aſſurance.

I ſay, *good* men may give themſelves this rational ſatisfaction: for I grant a *wicked* man, that rejects and diſobeys the Truth of God, may ſo provoke him, as *to give him up to ſtrong deluſions, to believe lies*; and he may be as confident of a Lie, as a *good* man is of Truth. But as this is not unjuſt from God in reference to the Perſons, ſo it is no prejudice to the aſſurance which *good* men may have of Divine Revelation. And

Sermon III.

And this Aſſurance is ſuch, as it is not in the power of any evil ſpirit to convey to us, concerning a deluſion; or if it be in his power, he is not permitted to do it to any who have not highly provoked God, by rejecting the Truth, *to give them up to ſtrong deluſions, to believe lies*: and that ſuch perſons ſhould be obnoxious to ſuch deluſions, as it is not unjuſt in reference to them, ſo neither is it any prejudice to the Aſſurance which good men may have of ſuch Revelations, which are truly and really Divine.

But for the other ways of diſcerning true Revelation from falſe, which the *Jews* mention; as that the Spirit of God always works upon the Underſtanding, as well as the Imagination, and in conſequence with the uſe of Reaſon and Underſtanding, and gives ſome ſenſible notice of its ſeiſing upon men, I think all theſe to be uncertain, if they be examined. And if the *laſt* which they mention, *viz.* this that I have inſiſted upon, be true, all the other

are

are ſuperfluous. For what need any other Sign to aſſure a Man that that is a Divine Revelation, which carries along with it clear ſatisfaction and full aſſurance that it is ſuch?

So that it remains now, that we fix upon ſome particular ways whereby the Perſon, that hath a Divine Revelation, may be aſſured of it; and this I ſhall do by theſe Propoſitions.

Firſt, That God can work in the Mind of Man a firm perſwaſion of a thing, by giving him a clear and vigorous perception of it; and if ſo, then God can accompany his own Revelations with ſuch a clear and overpowering Light as ſhall diſcover to us the Divinity of them, and ſatisfie us thereof beyond all doubt and ſcruple. And this no Man can doubt of, that conſiders the vaſt Power and Influence which God, who made the Soul of Man, and perfectly knows the frame of it, muſt needs have upon the Mind and Underſtanding of Man.

Secondly,

Sermon III.

Secondly, God never perſwades a Man of any thing that contradicts the Natural and Eſſential Notions of his Mind and Underſtanding. For this would be to deſtroy his own Workmanſhip, and to impoſe that upon the Underſtanding of a Man, which whilſt it retains its own Nature, and remains what it is, it cannot poſſibly admit. For inſtance, we cannot imagine that God can perſwade any Man that there is no God: for he that believes any thing as from God, muſt neceſſarily believe there is a God; therefore it is impoſſible that he can be perſwaded of this as from God, that there is no God; and that he is not Wiſe and Juſt, and Good and Powerful; and that he is not to be honour'd and lov'd by all reaſonable Creatures: becauſe theſe do clearly and immediately contradict the moſt eſſential and fundamental Notions of our Minds concerning God, and the reſpect which is due to him: not only becauſe it is unworthy of God to go about to perſwade a Man of a Falſhood; but becauſe it is impoſſible in the nature of the thing, that the Mind

Mind of Man, which is naturally prepoſſeſt with contrary Notions, ſhould, whilſt it retains its own Nature, admit of ſuch as do clearly and immediately contradict them. For if theſe be natural Notions, That there is a God, that he muſt be Wiſe and Juſt, and Good and Powerful, and ought to be honoured and loved by his Creatures; the mind of man cannot poſſibly admit of any contrary Perſwaſions and Impreſſions: for the former Perſwaſions being natural to us, will always remain while our Nature remains; and if any Perſwaſions contrary to theſe could be wrought upon our Minds, they would ſignifie nothing, but would mutually deſtroy one another. For if any Man that is perſwaded that God is Good, (as every Man is, that is perſwaded he is at all) could, during the perſwaſion, be likewiſe of a contrary Perſwaſion, that he is not Good; this latter Perſwaſion would ſignifie nothing: for he is not perſwaded that God is not Good, whilſt he retains this Perſwaſion that he is Good.

Thirdly,

Sermon III.

Thirdly, Suppoſing the thing revealed do not contradict the eſſential Notions of our Minds, no good and holy man hath reaſon to doubt of any thing, whether it be a Revelation from God or not, of which he hath a clear and vigorous perception, and full ſatisfaction in his own Mind that it is ſuch. For if a man may have reaſon to doubt of any thing, whereof he hath a clear perception, then no man can be certain of any thing. Now that there is ſuch a thing as Certainty, is now ſuppoſed, and not to be proved. I ſay, a *good* and *holy* man can have no reaſon to doubt: for a *wicked* man (I grant) may, by a ſinful rejection of, and diſobedience to the Truth, ſo far provoke God, as *to give him up to ſtrong deluſions to believe lies*; and he may be as confident of a Lie, as any *good* man is of the Truth.

And as this is not unjuſt from God in reference to *wicked* men, ſo is it no prejudice to the aſſurance which good men may have concerning a Divine Revelation.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, A *good* and *holy* man reflecting upon this Aſſurance and Perſwaſion that he hath, may be able to give himſelf a reaſonable account of it, and ſatisfie himſelf that it is not a *ſtubborn belief* and an *obſtinate conceit* of things without any ground or reaſon. A good man is ſecretly and within himſelf perſwaded, that God hath revealed to him ſuch a thing; reflecting upon this perſwaſion, he finds that it is a Foreign Impreſſion, and doth not ſpring from his own Mind: Now he believing that there is a God, who can, and probably doth communicate and reveal himſelf to the Minds of good men; and being withal ſatisfied that his Goodneſs is ſuch, that he will not ſuffer good men, who do heartily and ſincerely deſire to know his Will, to be under a neceſſity of Deluſion, (which they unavoidably are, if they may then be deceived, when they have the greateſt aſſurance, and cleareſt ſatisfaction that ſuch a thing is revealed to them of God;) from hence he reaſonably concludes, That he ought not to queſtion the matter any farther. I might

might inſtance in the Revelation made to *Abraham*, concerning the ſacrificing of his Son, which hath the greateſt difficulty in it of any caſe I know of: But of that I have elſewhere diſcourſed at large. * Thus much for the *Firſt*.

* *See* vol. 1. Serm. 2.

Secondly, What aſſurance can other Perſons, who have not the Revelation immediately made to them, have of a Divine Revelation? To this I ſhall Anſwer by theſe Propoſitions.

1. That there are ſome means whereby a man may be aſſured of another's Revelation that it is Divine. For,

(1.) Otherwiſe it would ſignifie nothing, but only to the Perſon that immediately had it; which would make void the chief end of moſt Revelations, which are ſeldom made to particular Perſons for their own ſakes only, but for the moſt part, on purpoſe that they may be made known to others, which could not effectually be done, unleſs there be ſome means whereby men may be aſſured of Revelations made to another.

(2) None

Volume XII.

(2.) None could be guilty of Unbelief but thoſe who had immediate Revelation made to them. For no man is guilty of Unbelief that is not obliged to believe: but no man can be under an Obligation to believe any thing, who hath not ſufficient means whereby he may be aſſured that ſuch a thing is true.

2. The private aſſurance and ſatisfaction of another concerning a Revelation made to him, can ſignifie nothing at all to me, to aſſure me of it. For what ſatisfaction is it to me, that another may ſay, he hath a Revelation, unleſs I have ſome means to be aſſured that what he ſays is true? For if I muſt believe every Spirit, that is every man that ſays he is inſpired, I lie open to all poſſible Impoſtures and Deluſions, and muſt believe every one that either fooliſhly conceits, or falſely pretends that he hath a Revelation: for both the conceited and pretended Enthuſiaſt will ſay they have Revelations, with as much confidence as thoſe who are truly and divinely inſpired: and to take

take every man's word in matters of such huge conſequence and importance, as Revelation from God ought to be preſumed to be, would not be *Faith*, but *Credulity*, that is, an ungrounded Perſwaſion; which how ſeverely God puniſh'd, you may ſee in that famous inſtance, 1 *Kings* 13. where the Prophet that was ſent to *Bethel*, is upon his return torn in pieces by a Lion, becauſe of his credulity and eaſie belief of a pretended Revelation. I confeſs this caſe is ſomewhat different from theirs who ſimply believe a pretended Revelation, as being complicated with ſome other aggravating Circumſtances. For he had had an immediate Revelation from God, *not to eat, nor drink at Bethel*; *nor to return the ſame way that he came*: upon his return an old Prophet meets him, and tells him that an Angel had appeared to him, and had bid him to bring him back, and to cauſe him to eat and drink; he believes him, and turns in with him. Now this was the Aggravation of his Incredulity, that when he himſelf had had an expreſs Revelation from God, concern-

Sermon III.

Volume XII.

ing which he was ſatisfied, he hearkned to the pretended Revelation of another, concerning which he had no aſſurance, in contradiction to a Divine Revelation, which he knew to be ſuch. Not but that the Command which God had given him was in its own Nature revocable, and God might have countermanded it by another immediate Revelation to him, or by an equivalent, that is, a Miracle wrought by the Prophet who pretended to countermand it from God. *Unumquodque diſſolvitur eo modo quo ligatur*, the Obligation which was brought upon him by an immediate Revelation, could not be diſſolved but by another immediate Revelation, or Evidence equivalent to it. However, this Inſtance ſerves in the general to my purpoſe, that a man may be faulty by Credulity as well as by Unbelief: and as a man ought not to disbelieve where there is ſufficient Evidence; ſo neither ought he to believe any thing without ſufficient Grounds of Aſſurance.

3. That

Sermon III.

3. That Miracles wrought for the confirmation of any Divine Teſtimony or Revelation made to another, are a ſufficient means, whereby thoſe who have not the Divine Revelation immediately made to them, may be aſſured that it is Divine; I ſay theſe are ſufficient means of Aſſurance in this caſe. I do not ſay they are the only means: (for it does not become men to limit the Power and Wiſdom of God) but I do not know of any other means of Aſſurance, upon which men can ſecurely rely; and it is a great Preſumption that this is the beſt and fitteſt, if not the only means, becauſe the Wiſdom of God hath always pitched upon it, and conſtantly made uſe of it, and no other. Under Miracles I comprehend the Prediction of Future Events, which God claims as a peculiar Prerogative to himſelf, becauſe ſuch things are out of the reach of any created underſtanding; and therefore in the Prophet *Iſa.* he challengeth the Idols of the Heathens to give this Teſtimony, or Ar-

gument of their divinity; *Shew us things that are to come, that we may know that ye are Gods.*

But here we muſt diſtinguiſh between *doubtful* and *unqueſtionable* Miracles. I call thoſe *doubtful* Miracles, which, tho' a man cannot tell how they can be done by any natural Power, yet do not carry that full Conviction with them, as to be univerſally own'd and acknowledged for Arguments of a Divine Power. Such were thoſe which the Magicians did by their Inchantments. I call thoſe *unqueſtionable*, which, conſidering their Quality and Number, and the publick manner of doing of them, are out of all Queſtion. Such were the Miracles of *Moſes*, and our *Saviour*. Now a *doubtful*, and a *ſingle*, and a *private* Wonder, or Miracle, as I may call it, can give no confirmation to any thing in oppoſition to a Revelation, or a Doctrine confirmed by *many*, and *publick*, and *unqueſtionable* Miracles. Upon this account *Moſes* forbids the Children of *Iſrael* to hearken to any Prophet that ſhould come

come to ſeduce them to Idolatry; yea, tho' he ſhould give a *ſign* or *wonder*, and the *ſign or wonder ſhould come to paſs*, *Deut* 13. 1, 2, 3, 4. Now here lies the ſtrength of the Reaſon, *Becauſe he hath ſpoken to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the Land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the Houſe of Bondage*; that is, becauſe he contradicts the great revelation which God made of himſelf, and confirmed by ſuch a ſucceſſion of ſo many, and ſo great Miracles; the credit of which Revelation ought not in reaſon to be call'd in queſtion, upon the working of a ſingle and a private wonder, which we could not diſtinguiſh from a Miracle. Upon the ſame account St. *Paul*, *Gal.* 1. 8. ſays, *Tho' an Angel from heaven ſhould preach any other Doctrine than that which had been preached unto them, he ſhould be accurſed*; that is, after ſo clear and great confirmation, as was given to the Goſpel, a contrary Doctrine, though it ſhould come from *an Angel*, ſhould be rejected as execrable. Sermon III.

But you will ſay, Suppoſe ſuch a

Volume XII.

Prophet as *Moſes* ſpeaks of here, ſuch an Angel as St. *Paul* mentions, ſhould work as many and as great Miracles as *Moſes* and *Chriſt* wrought, ſhould we then believe them?

I *Anſwer*; This is not to be ſuppos'd: for ſuppoſing the Providence of God in the World, it cannot be imagined that an equal atteſtation ſhould be given to a falſe Doctrine and a true. But that the greateſt and moſt unqueſtionable Miracles are to carry it, is evident; becauſe this is all the reaſon why *Moſes* was to be credited above the Magicians, becauſe he wrought more and greater Wonders than they did. But if it could be ſuppoſed that any one could work as great Miracles for the confirmation of Idolatry, as were wrought by way of atteſtation to the true Worſhip of God, then there would be no difference, but what the reaſon of the thing makes the Belief of one God being more reaſonable than many; and not to make an Image or ſenſible repreſentation of a Spirit, being more reaſonable than to make one. But if this could be ſuppos'd, the

the natural iſſue and conſequence of it would be Atheiſm; a man would believe neither that nor the other, nor that there is any God at all. Sermon III.

But a farther account of the Nature and Difference of Miracles, I reſerve to ſome * particular Diſcourſes on that Subject. At preſent, for the fuller opening of this matter, it will be proper to ſhew,

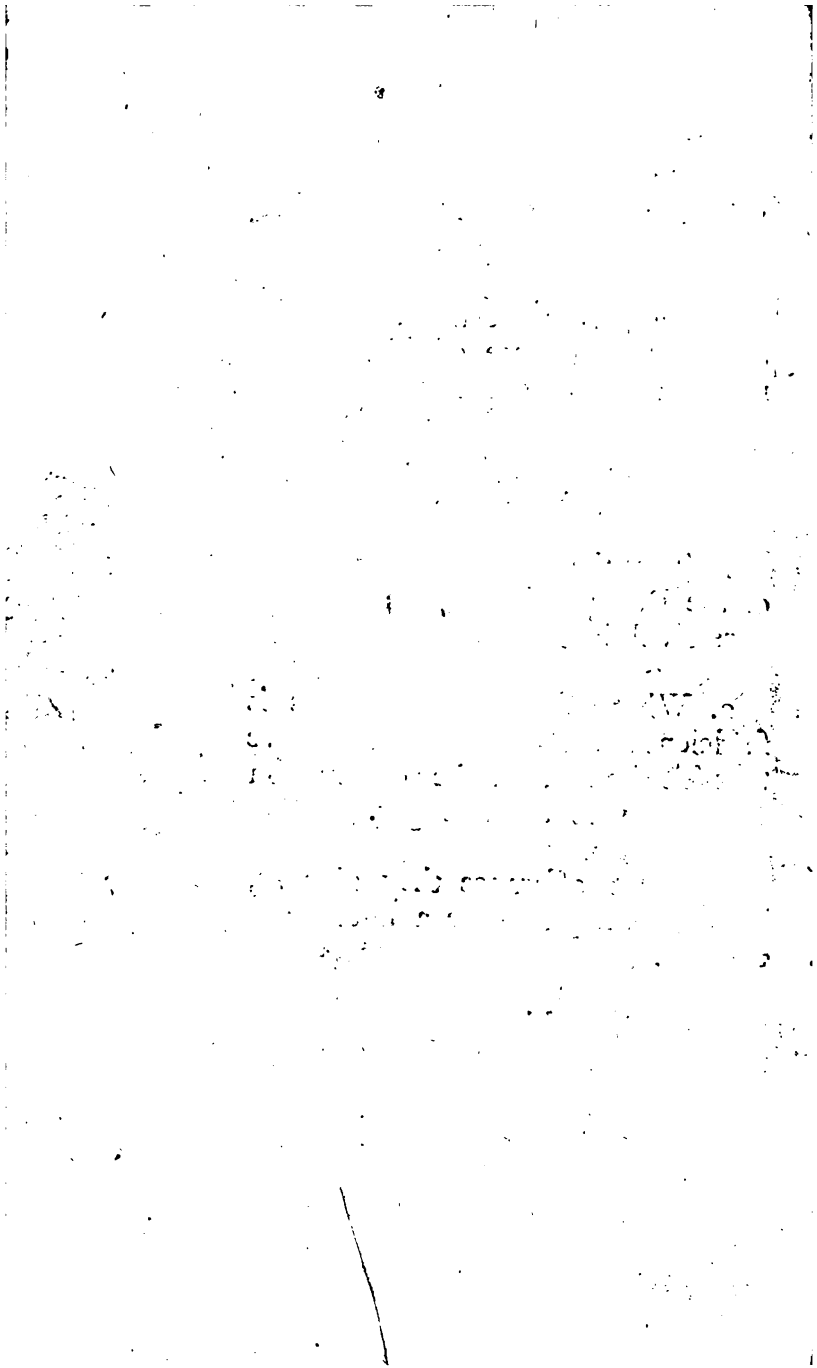
* See Sermons on *Heb.* 2. 4. in this Vol.

1. That the Divine Authority both of the Doctrine of *Moſes* and *Chriſt* is reſolv'd into Miracles.

2. What aſſurance of Miracles is ſufficient to perſwade men to believe that Teſtimony, for the confirmation of which they are wrought.

3. What aſſurance they give us, That the Scriptures are a *Divine Revelation.*

But the Conſideration of theſe I refer to the next opportunity.



SERMON IV.

Of the Faith or Perſwaſion of a Divine Revelation.

The fourth Sermon on this Text.

HEB. XI. 6.

But without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God.

IN diſcourſing of the Faith or Perſwaſion of a *Divine Revelation*, I propos'd the conſidering theſe *ſeven* things.

I. What we underſtand by a *Divine Revelation*.

II. The

Volume XII.

II. The ſeveral kinds of it.

III. Whether a Perſwaſion concerning a *Divine Revelation* be properly *Faith*.

IV. How we may come to be aſſured of a *Divine Revelation*; or by what Arguments, a *Faith* or Perſwaſion of a *Divine Revelation* is wrought in us.

V. The degrees of this Perſwaſion or Aſſurance.

VI. The Effects of it.

VII. In what ſenſe it may be ſaid to be a *divine Faith*.

I was upon the [IVth] of theſe, *viz.* Conſidering by what Arguments a *Faith* or Perſwaſion of a *Divine Revelation* is wrought in us; which led me to conſider the Evidence of Miracles; and I propos'd to ſhew particularly theſe *three* things.

1. That the divine Authority both of

of the Doctrine of *Moſes* and *Chriſt*, is reſolv'd into Miracles. Sermon IV.

2. What aſſurance of Miracles is ſufficient to perſwade men to believe that Teſtimony, for the Confirmation of which they are wrought.

3. What aſſurance they give us, that the Scriptures are a *Divine Revelation.*

I proceed to treat of theſe in their order.

1. I ſhall ſhew that the divine Authority both of the Doctrine of *Moſes*, and of *Chriſt*, is reſolved into Miracles. We find the Scripture lays the whole weight of the divine Authority both of the Law and Goſpel, of the revelation of the Old and New Teſtament, upon this Evidence. *Exod.* 4. 1, 2, 3. When God ſends *Moſes*, he objects, *That they will not believe him, nor hearken to him, but will ſay, The Lord hath not appeared unto him.* Thereupon God gives him a power of Miracles, that they may believe, *That the Lord God of their Fathers,*

Volume XII.

Fathers, the God of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob had appeared unto them; and by the evidence of thoſe Miracles which he wrought, he prevail'd over the Magicians. And generally throughout the Story of the Old Teſtament we find all perſons yielding to the evidence of Miracles, as a ſufficient atteſtation to a Prophet and his Meſſage. When *Elijah* had prevailed with God in a miraculous manner, to confirm his own Worſhip, and confute the Worſhip of *Baal*, by ſending Fire from Heaven to conſume the Sacrifice, the People yield to this Evidence, and cry out, *The Lord he is God, the Lord he is God*, 1 *Kings* 18. 39. When *Elijah* raiſed the Woman's Son, then ſhe own'd him for a Prophet, 1 *Kings* 17. 24. *Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is true.* So likewiſe *Naaman* was convinced by the miraculous Cure which the Prophet *Eliſha* wrought on him, 2 *Kings* 5. 15. *Behold! now I know that there is no God in all the Earth but in Iſrael.*

And

Sermon IV.

And ſo likewiſe the Divinity of our Saviour and his Doctrine is reſolved into the Evidence of his Miracles. This is the Evidence Chriſt gives of himſelf, when *John* ſent his Diſciples to enquire whether he was the Meſſias, *Mat.* 11. 2. *Now when John had heard in the priſon the works of Chriſt, he ſent two of his diſciples, and ſaid unto him, Art thou he that ſhould come: or do we look for another? Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Go and ſhew John again thoſe things which ye do hear, and ſee. The blind receive their ſight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleanſed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raiſed up, and the poor have the Goſpel preached unto them. And bleſſed is he whoſoever ſhall not be offended in me.* So *John* 5. 36. *But I have greater witneſs than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finiſh, the ſame works that I do, bear witneſs of me, that the Father hath ſent me.* Chap. 10. 25. *Jeſus anſwered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Fathers Name, they bear witneſs of*

Volume XII.

of me. Verſ. 37, 38. *If I do not the works of my Father; believe me not: but if I do; though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him.* Chap. 14. 11. *Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or elſe believe me for the very works ſake.* Chap. 20. 30, 31. *And many other ſigns truly did Jeſus in the preſence of his diſciples, which are not written in this book. But theſe are written, that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his Name.* And from hence our Saviour aggravates the Unbelief, and Impenitency of the *Jews*, becauſe they reſiſted this higheſt Evidence, *Mat.* 11. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. *Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein moſt of his mighty works were done, becauſe they repented not. Woe unto thee Chorazin, woe unto thee Bethſaida. For iff the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in ſackcloth and aſhes. But I ſay unto you, it ſhall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day*

Sermon IV.

day of Judgment, than for you. And thou Capernaum which art exalted unto heaven, ſhalt be brought down to hell. For if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodome, it would have remained until this day. But I ſay unto you, That it ſhall be more tolerable for the land of Sodome in the day of Judgment, than for thee. John, 15. 24. *If I had not done among them the works which none other man did; they had not had ſin: but now have they both ſeen, and hated both me and my Father.* And ſo the Apoſtle tells us, That Miracles are the great confirmation of the Goſpel, and are ſo clear an Evidence of the Truth of it, that they render all Unbelievers inexcuſable, *Heb.* 2. 2, 3. *For if the word ſpoken by Angels was ſtedfaſt, and every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience received a juſt recompence of reward: How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation, which at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him!*

In particular, The great weight of

of the Goſpel is laid upon the *Miracle* of Chriſt's Reſurrection from the dead, which our Saviour mentions as the *only ſign that ſhould be given to that generation*, that is, the cleareſt. And the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 1. 4. ſaith, That *he was declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the Spirit of holineſs, by the reſurrection from the dead.* This put it out of all queſtion. And St. *Paul* in his Sermon to the *Athenians*, *Acts* 17. 30, 31, inſiſts upon this as the great Evidence; *And the times of their ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Becauſe he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that man whom he hath ordain'd, whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.* And this was the proper work of the Apoſtles, to be Witneſſes to the World of this great *Miracle*, *Acts* 1. 21, 22. *Wherefore of theſe men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jeſus went in and out among us, beginning from the Baptiſm of John, unto that ſame day that he was taken up*

up from us, muſt one be ordained to be a witneſs with us of his reſurrection. Sermon IV.
So St. *Peter* in his Sermon, *Acts* 2. 32. *Him hath God raiſed up, whereof we all are witneſſes.* And to mention no more, *Acts* 10. 38, 39, 40, 41. *God anointed Jeſus of Nazareth with the holy Ghoſt and with Power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppreſſed of the Devil: for God was with him. And we are witneſſes of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Hieruſalem; whom they ſlew and hanged on a tree: Him God raiſed up the third day, and ſhewed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witneſſes choſen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with him after he roſe from the dead.*

2. What aſſurance of Miracles is ſufficient to perſwade men to believe the Revelation or Teſtimony, for the confirmation of which they are wrought. Of this aſſurance there are *three* degrees, all which do oblige men to believe the Divine Revelation for which they are wrought.

(1.) If we have the evidence of our own Senſes for it, that is, if we ſee them wrought. This Evidence the Diſciples of our Lord had, and the *Jews*, and therefore their unbelief was

Volume XII.

inexcuſable; and the Blaſpheming of the Spirit, whereby they ſaw ſuch Miracles to be wrought, was the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt.

(2.) If we have the credible report of Eye-witneſſes of thoſe Miracles, who are credible Perſons, and we have no reaſon to doubt of their Teſtimony; that is, if we have the Reports of them immediately from the mouth of thoſe who were Eye-witneſſes of them. That this lays likewiſe an obligation on men to believe, appears by our Saviour's reproof of *Thomas*, who would not believe except he himſelf ſaw: but moſt expreſly from that Text, *Mark* 16. 14. *He upbraided them with their unbelief and hardneſs of heart, becauſe they believed not them which had ſeen him after he was riſen.*

(3.) If the credible report of Eye-witneſſes concerning ſuch *Miracles* be conveyed to us in ſuch a manner, and with ſo much evidence, as we have no reaſon to doubt of it. For why ſhould we not believe a credible Report conveyed to us in ſuch a manner, as we have no reaſon to queſtion, but that it hath been faithfully conveyed and tranſmitted to us? St. *John* thought

thought this to be Aſſurance ſufficient to induce belief, *John* 20. 31. *But theſe things were written, that ye might believe*, &c. And this is that Aſſurance which we, who live at this diſtance from the Age of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, have of the *Miracles* wrought in confirmation of the Goſpel. I ſhall have occaſion to enlarge upon theſe Heads hereafter. Sermon IV.

3. What aſſurance *Miracles* give us, that the Scriptures are a *Divine Revelation.* And this contains *four* diſtinct Queſtions in it.

1. What aſſurance we have from hence, that the Doctrine contained in the Scripture is from God? To which the Anſwer is eaſie; Becauſe theſe *Miracles* were wrought for the confirmation of this Doctrine.

2. The Queſtion is, What Aſſurance the *Miracles* give us, that thoſe perſons who are ſaid to be the Pen-men of the ſeveral Books of Scripture, were really ſo? To this I Anſwer; None at all: for I do not know of any Miracle that was wrought to prove *Moſes* wrote the Pentateuch, or that St. *Matthew* wrote the Goſpel which goes under his Name. But if the Queſtion be, How then am I aſſured of this?

I Anſwer, By credible and uncontroul'd Report. It bears his Name, and hath always been received for his: and if this will not ſatisfie, I cannot prove it farther, it is too late now to prove it by any other Argument. St. *Matthew* is dead, and thoſe who ſaw him write it, and thoſe who received it from them; ſo that we cannot go to enquire of them in order to our ſatisfaction: but the beſt of it is, that as it cannot now be proved at this diſtance, otherwiſe than by conſtant and uncontroul'd report; ſo no Man at this diſtance can have any reaſon to doubt of it; and ſo long as no man can have any reaſon to doubt of it; there can be no need of proving it, eſpecially conſidering that it is by no means neceſſary to Salvation, to believe that St. *Matthew* wrote the Hiſtory of the Goſpel; but only to believe what he wrote.

3. The Queſtion is, What aſſurance *Miracles* give, that thoſe perſons who are ſaid to be the Pen-men of the Books of Scripture were divinely inſpired? The *Miracles* (under which I comprehend the Prediction of future Events) which *Moſes*, and the *Prophets*, and the *Apoſtles* wrought, were

Teſtimonies from Heaven, that they were Divine Perſons, and that what they ſaid was to be credited, and conſequently if they gave out themſelves for ſuch, that they were ſuch. That the Pen-men of the New Teſtament were Perſons endued with a miraculous Power, is plain, becauſe they were moſt of them Apoſtles: and for the reſt we have no reaſon to doubt of it; thoſe extraordinary Gifts being ſo common in the Primitive times: however, ſo long as there is nothing in the reſt, that is diſſonant from, or contrary to what thoſe wrote, of whoſe Inſpirations we are aſſur'd, and theſe their Writings having always been receiv'd in the Church as of Divine Inſpiration, which we may well preſume was not raſhly done, and without grounds, we have no reaſon to doubt as to them: or if there were, ſo long as they contain nothing that is contrary to thoſe who were unqueſtionably inſpired, the matter is of no dangerous conſequence. And as for the Pen-men of the Old Teſtament, we are aſſured that they were all inſpired, by one in the New Teſtament, that was unqueſtionably ſo;

Sermon IV.

Volume XII.

St. *Paul*, who tells us, *that all Scripture is of Divine Inſpiration*, meaning the Books of the Old Teſtament, which were call'd by that Name κατ' ἐξοχήν, or by way of Eminency.

But if any one enquire farther, How far the Pen-men of Scripture were inſpired in the writing of thoſe Books? whether only ſo far as to be ſecur'd from miſtake in the delivery of any Meſſage or Doctrine from God, or in the relation of any Hiſtory, or Matter of Fact; yet ſo, as they were left every man to his own Stile and manner of Expreſſion? or that every thing they wrote, was immediately dictated to them, and that not only the Senſe of it, but the very Words and Phraſes by which they expreſs things, and that they were meerly Inſtruments or Pen-men; I ſhall not take upon me to determine; I ſhall only ſay this in general, that conſidering the End of this Inſpiration, which was to inform the World certainly of the Mind and Will of God, it is neceſſary for every man to believe that the inſpired Pen-men of Scripture were ſo far aſſiſted as was neceſſary to this End;

End: and he that thinks upon good Grounds, that this End cannot be ſecured, unleſs every Word and Syllable were immediately dictated, he hath reaſon to believe it was ſo; but if any man upon good Grounds thinks the end of writing the Scripture may be ſufficiently ſecured without that, he hath no reaſon to conclude, that God, who is not wanting in what is neceſſary, is guilty of doing what is ſuperfluous. And if any man is of opinion that *Moſes* might write the Hiſtory of thoſe Actions which he himſelf did or was preſent at, without an immediate Revelation of them; or that *Solomon* by his natural and acquired Wiſdom might ſpeak thoſe Wiſe Sayings which are in his *Proverbs*; or the *Evangeliſts* might write what they heard and ſaw, or what they had good Aſſurance of from others, as St. *Luke* tells he did; or that St. *Paul* might write for his Cloak and Parchments at *Troas*, and ſalute by name his Friends and Brethren, or that he might adviſe *Timothy* to drink a little Wine, *&c.* without the immediate dictate of the Spirit of God, he ſeems to have reaſon

Volume XII.

on his side. For that men may, without an immediate Revelation, write those things which they think without a Revelation seems very plain. And that they did so, there is this probable Argument for it, because we find that the Evangelists, in relating the Discourses of Christ, are very far from agreeing in the particular Expressions and Words, tho' they do agree in the Substance of the Discourses: but if the Words had been dictated by the Spirit of God, they must have agreed in them. For when St. *Luke* differs from St. *Matthew*, in relating what our Saviour said, it is impossible that they should both relate it right as to the very Words and Forms of Expression; but they both relate the Substance of what he said. And if it had been of Concernment, that every thing that they wrote, should be dictated *ad apicem*, to a tittle, by the Spirit of God, it is of the same Concernment still, that the Providence of God should have secured the Scriptures since to a tittle from the least alteration; which that it is not done, appears by the various readings both of the Old and New Testament, concern-

cerning which, no man can infallibly ſay, that this is right, and not the other. It ſeems ſufficient in this matter to aſſert, that the Spirit of God did reveal to the Pen-men of the Scriptures what was neceſſary to be revealed; and as to all other things, that he did ſuperintend them in the writing of it, ſo far as to ſecure them from any material Error or Miſtake in what they have delivered. Or, Sermon IV.

4. If the Queſtion be, What aſſurance we have from Miracles, that all thoſe Books which we receive are canonical? To this I Anſwer, I do not know of any Miracle that was ever wrought on purpoſe to confirm the Canon of the Scriptures: but as for the Books of the Old Teſtament, we have ſufficient aſſurance, that thoſe which we now receive, are thoſe which the *Jews* received for ſuch in our Saviour's time; and he doth not any where find fault with any of them as not Canonical, which we have no reaſon to doubt but he would have done, if any one of them had been otherwiſe. And that theſe are the ſame the *Jews* then received, appears ſufficiently

Volume XII.

ciently, becauſe both *Jews* and *Chriſtians* to this day agree in them. As for the Books of the New Teſtament, we are ſufficiently aſſur'd, That theſe and no other are the Books which the Ancient Church received for Canonical, and of Divine Authority; and tho' ſome of them were for a time controverted, yet upon farther enquiry and examination they were received.

V. Whether this Faith concerning a Divine Revelation made to others, do admit of degrees? That it doth is evident from theſe Expreſſions which the Scripture uſeth, of *increaſing Faith*, of *growing in it*, of *a weak*, and *ſtrong faith*, all which plainly ſuppoſe degrees. And that theſe degrees of Faith which the Scripture ſpeaks of, are to be underſtood of a higher and lower degree of aſſurance concerning a Divine Revelation as ſuch, and concerning the things revealed, I ſhew'd before. For all the Doubts which the Diſciples had concerning what our Saviour taught, did reſolve it ſelf into this, Whether he was the *Meſſias*, and ſent by God to teach thoſe things; which had they been fully ſatisfied of, they

they could have made no doubt of any thing that he taught.

And here it will be proper to enquire, what is the higheſt degree of aſſurance which we can have concerning a Divine Revelation made to another, that it is ſuch; whether it be an infallible aſſurance, or only an undoubted certainty. The difference between them is this; An infallible aſſurance is ſuch as excludes all poſſibility of Error and Miſtake: an undoubted certainty doth not exclude all poſſibility of miſtake, but only all juſt and reaſonable cauſe why a prudent and conſiderate man ſhould doubt. And the reaſon why I make this Enquiry, is in order to be ſatisfied of a clear and firm way for the reſolution of our Faith againſt the Papiſts, who ſay it is impoſſible for us to give any ſatisfactory account of our Faith, becauſe we do finally reſolve it into fallible grounds, and conſequently our Faith muſt be fallible, and conſequently cannot be Divine, becauſe all Divine Faith is infallible: for, ſay they, when we enquire why you believe the Doctrines of Chriſtian Religion; You ſay,

Volume XII.

ſay, Upon Divine Authority, or the Revelation of God in Scripture. This is granted to be in an infallible ground, if we can be infallibly aſſur'd that the Scriptures are a Divine Revelation; therefore they enquire in the ſecond Place; Why do you believe the Scriptures to be a Divine Revelation? We ſay, becauſe the Perſons who deliver'd the Doctrines contained in them, had the greateſt atteſtation from God, that they were imployed by him, to reveal and make known his Mind; and this atteſtation was Miracles. But then they ask, What aſſurance have you that ſuch Miracles were wrought? Have you an infallible aſſurance, or not? If not, then it cannot be a ſufficient ground for a Divine Faith, which is always infallible. In oppoſition therefore to them, I ſhall not now attempt to ſhew the inſufficiency of their way of reſolving Faith; but vindicate ours as ſufficient, by laying down and proving, if I can, theſe Propoſitions.

1. That Infallibility is not eſſential to Divine Faith, and neceſſarily included in the Notion of it; which I prove

prove thus. Divine Faith admits of Degrees, as I have shewed before: but there can be no degree of Infallibility. Infallibility is an impossibility of being deceived; but there are no degrees of impossibility; one thing is not more impossible than another; but all things that are impossible, are equally so. Sermon IV.

2. That the assurance which we have of the Miracles wrought for the confirmation of the Gospel, is not an infallible assurance. I shew'd before that there are *three* ways whereby we may be assured of matter of fact, such as the working of Miracles is.

First, By our own Senses.

Secondly, By the Report of credible Witness.

Thirdly, By credible History. But none of these ways give us infallible assurance. That it is possible our Senses may deceive us, I think no body will deny; and if so, then the testimony of Witnesses, and the report of History, which likewise depends originally

Volume XII.

riginally upon Senſes, may deceive us. I do not know a *fourth* way whereby we may be aſſured of matter of Fact.

3. That an undoubted aſſurance of a Divine Revelation, that it is ſuch, is as much as in reaſon can be expected. I deny not but that a Divine Revelation is an infallible ground of Faith; becauſe whatever God ſays is infallibly true, and a Faith built upon a Divine Revelation would be infallible, if we could be infallibly aſſured that it is a Divine Revelation; but that we cannot be without another Divine Revelation to aſſure us infallibly that this is one, and that other would require a third, and ſo without end, which being abſurd and unreaſonable, it remains that an infallible aſſurance of a Divine Revelation is impoſſible; and conſequently, that we can have no more than an undoubted aſſurance; and this is as much as in reaſon we can expect to have; for 'tis unreaſonable to expect that we ſhould have any greater aſſurance that ſuch a revelation is from God, than we have that there is a God; becauſe that there

there is a God, is the firſt and moſt fundamental Principle of Religion, and it is unreaſonable to expect greater aſſurance of any thing in Religion, than we have of that which is the firſt Principle of it. And indeed it is impoſſible; for no man can be infallibly aſſured, that a Revelation is from God, unleſs he be firſt infallibly aſſured that there is a God, but no man hath more than undoubted aſſurance that there is a God. No man pretends to a Divine Revelation that there is a God; but only to have rational ſatisfaction of it, ſuch as leaves no juſt or reaſonable cauſe to doubt of it. And why then ſhould any deſire greater aſſurance of a Divine Revelation, than he hath of a God? Sermon IV. +

4. An undoubted Aſſurance is ſufficient to conſtitute a *Divine Faith*. *Mark* 16. 14. it is ſaid, *Chriſt upbraided his diſciples with their unbelief; becauſe they believed not them, who had ſeen him after he was riſen.* Suppoſe now the Diſciples had believed, which they ought to have done; this Faith of theirs would have been a truly Divine Faith; but by no means

Volume XII.

means infallible. For that cannot be an infallible Faith which is built but upon fallible Grounds: now the Ground upon which they ought to have believed, was the Report of credible Witneſſes; but the Report of credible Witneſſes is by no means infallible: 'tis indeed undoubted, for I have no reaſon to doubt of a credible Report; for that is credible which I have juſt cauſe to believe; but I can have no juſt cauſe to doubt of that which I have juſt cauſe to believe.

As an undoubted Aſſurance is ſufficient to conſtitute a Divine Faith, ſo is it ſufficient to all the ends and purpoſes of a divine Faith. To inſtance in the Faith of the Promiſes of Eternal Life. What is the End and Deſign of this Faith, but to encourage our Obedience, and make us continue in it, notwithſtanding the hazard of any thing in this World? Now I ſay, an undoubted aſſurance is abundantly ſufficient to this end. Do not men venture their Eſtates in traffick to places they never ſaw, becauſe they have it from credible perſons, that there are ſuch places; and they have no reaſon

to

to doubt their teſtimony: and why ſhould not the ſame aſſurance ſerve in greater matters; if an undoubted aſſurance of a leſſer benefit and advantage will make men venture as much. Why ſhould any man deſire greater aſſurance of any thing, than to have no juſt reaſon to doubt of it; why more than ſo much as the thing is capable of? I cannot poſſibly underſtand, why every man ſhould not be contented with ſufficient aſſurance, or for what reaſon a man ſhould deſire more than enough; and why a man ſhould not be ſatisfied that a thing is ſo, when he hath as great aſſurance of it, and as good evidence for it, as he could have, ſuppoſing it were. Sermon IV.

And for men to ſay, Nothing leſs than infallible aſſurance can ſatisfie a man's mind, that men will always doubt ſo long as there is a poſſibility of the contrary, and there will be a poſſibility of the contrary, until we have infallible aſſurance, is as unreaſonable as can be imagined. I ask any man, whether he be infallibly aſſured that there was ſuch a man as *William* the *Conquerour*? or that there is ſuch a Countrey as

Volume XII.

Spain? If he ſay he is, I ask, Where is his infallible evidence for this? He will cite ſeveral Hiſtorians: but all this is humane teſtimony, and that is fallible. It ſeems then he is not infallibly certain there was ſuch a man, or there is ſuch a Countrey; and conſequently there is a poſſibility of the contrary. 'Tis granted there is: But is any ſober man unſatisfied in his mind about theſe things? I would fain meet with the man, that will tell me in good earneſt, that he hath reaſon to doubt, whether there was ſuch a Man, or not; and whether there be ſuch a place as *Spain*, or not? So that it is fond for any man to alledge a bare poſſibility of the contrary, as a reaſonable cauſe of doubting concerning any thing, for which we have as good evidence as the thing is capable of.

Upon theſe grounds we can eaſily reſolve our Faith. We believe the Doctrine of Chriſtian Religion, becauſe it is revealed by God; we believe it to be revealed by God, becauſe it was confirmed by unqueſtionable Miracles;

cles; we believe ſuch Miracles were wrought, becauſe we have as great aſſurance of this, as any Matter of Fact, at ſuch a diſtance from the time it was done, is capable of. Now if the *Papiſts* ſay, This doth at laſt amount to no more than moral aſſurance; I grant it doth not: but then I have proved this aſſurance to be as much as in reaſon can be expected, and as much as is ſufficient to the Nature and Ends of a Divine Faith, and that an infallible aſſurance is not agreeable to a human underſtanding; but an incommunicable attribute and prerogative of the Divine Nature, which whoever pretends to, he hath not the modeſty of a Creature, but does by a ſacrilegious ambition attempt the Throne of God, and equal himſelf to the moſt High. And therefore it is no wonder that the *Popes* of *Rome*, after they had once aſſumed to themſelves to be infallible, did preſently arrogate to themſelves the titles of God, there being ſuch ſtrict connexion between the attribute of infallibility, and the Divine Nature, that

Volume XII.

whoever challengeth the firſt, may with equal Reaſon claim the other.

I ſhall only add this, that nothing hath been more pernicious to Chriſtian Religion, than the vain pretence of men to greater aſſurance concerning things relating to it, than they can make good; the Miſchief of which is this; that when diſcerning and inquiſitive men find that men pretend to greater Matters than they can prove, this makes them doubt of all they ſay, and to call in queſtion the Truth of Chriſtianity it ſelf. Whereas if men would be contented to ſpeak juſtly of things, and pretend to no greater Aſſurance than they can bring Evidence for; conſiderate men would be apt to believe them. Every knowing Man being more ready to liſten to a modeſt Man, whoſe confidence bears a proportion to the Reaſons and Arguments he brings for what he ſays, than to a confident Pretender, who calls every weak ſaying a Demonſtration. And indeed ſuch men are but juſtly dealt withal, ſince the expe-

perience of the World hath ſufficiently taught us, that uſually thoſe who ſpeak modeſtly of things are furniſh'd with the beſt Arguments for their Aſſertions; and that thoſe who have made the ſtrongeſt Pretences to Infallibility in any thing, have the weakeſt reaſons for what they have ſaid; of which this account may be given, that good Reaſons and Arguments are requiſite to beget in a man a rational aſſurance; but a ſtrong conceit is ſufficient to beget in men an opinion of Infallibility. Sermon IV.

VI. What is the proper and genuin Effect of this *Faith* of a *Divine Revelation?* I *Anſwer:* A Compliance with the Deſign and Intention of it.

VII. In what reſpect this may be called a *Divine Faith?* To this I *Anſwer:* Not only in reſpect of the Object of it, and the Argument whereby it is wrought, and the Effect of it: but likewiſe in reſpect of the Author and Efficient of it, which is the Divine Spirit. And here, if time would permit, I ſhould ſpeak

Volume XII.

of the Teſtimony of the Spirit; not as an Argument whereby a perſwaſion of a *Divine Revelation*, viz. That the Scriptures are the Word of God, is wrought; but alſo as he is the Author and efficient Cauſe of it. I do moſt readily grant the great Influence that the Spirit of God hath upon the minds of men in this work of Faith, as well as in every Spiritual Act: But it is to be enquired, how the Spirit of God may be ſaid to work this Faith in us; whether by ſtrengthning the Faculty; or by holding the mind intent upon the Argument, whereby this perſwaſion is wrought; or diſcovering the Object; or removing the Impediments; or farthering and helping forward the efficacy of it upon our Hearts and Lives. But of this, God willing, in my next Diſcourſe.

SER-

SERMON V.

Of the Teſtimony of the Spirit, to the Truth of the Goſpel.

The Fifth Sermon on this Text.

HEB. XI. 6.

But without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God.

IN diſcourſing of the Faith or Perſwaſion of a *Divine Revelation*, I came to enquire, In what reſpects this may be call'd a Divine Faith. To which my *Anſwer* was, that it is a Divine Faith, not only with reſpect to the Object of it, and the Argument whereby it is wrought,

Volume XII.

and the Effect of it: But likewiſe in reſpect of the Author and Efficient of it, which is the Divine Spirit. I proceed therefore to conſider the Teſtimony of the Divine Spirit, not only as an Argument whereby a Perſwaſion of a Divine Revelation, *viz.* That the Scriptures are the Word of God, is wrought: But alſo as he is the Author and efficient Cauſe of it. The Scripture doth in a peculiar manner aſcribe the belief of Divine Revelation, eſpecially of the Revelation of the Goſpel, to the Spirit of God. In this ſenſe the Scripture ſaith, *That no man can ſay, that Jeſus is the Chriſt, but by the Spirit of God.* And tho' every good perſwaſion that we have, be in ſome ſort or other to be aſcribed to God; yet I obſerve it to be the Phraſe of the New Teſtament, to attribute the belief of the Goſpel, in a more peculiar manner, to the Spirit of God. When any Man believes the Principles of Natural Religion, that there is a God, that the Soul is immortal, and that there are Rewards after this Life, as the Heathens did; even this is from God, who hath planted theſe Principles in our Natures;

tures; or, which comes all to one, hath given us ſuch Faculties, by the Uſe and Improvement of which, we may come to the knowledge of theſe Principles: but it is not uſual in the phraſe of Scripture, to attribute this Natural Knowledge in ſuch a peculiar manner to the Spirit of God. Sermon V.

When any man believes the matters of Divine Revelation, for Inſtance, the Doctrines contained in the Goſpel; this Faith is to be attributed to the Spirit of God; but not as immediately perſwading us of the truth of theſe Doctrines, but by perſwading us, that the Goſpel which contains theſe Truths, is a Divine Revelation; or which is all one, that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who delivered theſe Doctrines to the World, was a Divine Perſon, and came from God: and if we once firmly believe and entertain this, that *Jeſus* was the *Meſſias*, and ſent from God to acquaint the World with his Mind and Will; we can make no doubt of the truth of any thing which he hath delivered. So that the Faith which the Scripture doth in a peculiar manner attribute to the

Volume XII.

the Spirit of God, is this perſwaſion, *that Jeſus is the Chriſt*; that is, that he was the true *Meſſias*, and ſent from God.

So that the Queſtion is: How the Spirit of God doth concur to the begetting of this Faith or Perſwaſion? Or why this Faith is in ſuch a peculiar manner attributed to the Spirit of God?

I anſwer upon theſe *two* Accounts.

Firſt, In reſpect of the outward evidence which the Spirit of God gives us to perſwade us to believe.

Secondly, In reſpect of the inward efficacy and operation of the Spirit of God upon the Minds of Men in believing.

Firſt, In reſpect of the outward evidence, which the Spirit of God gives us to perſwade us to believe. And if this be not that which Divines mean by the teſtimony of the Spirit in this matter, yet I think it is that which may moſt properly be ſo called. Now the

the Spirit of God did outwardly teſtifie concerning Jeſus, that he was the *Meſſias*, and came from God; and that the Doctrine which he taught was Divine. Sermon V.

1. In the Voice from Heaven, which accompanied the deſcending of the Spirit upon him, in the form of a Dove, ſaying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed*, Mat. 3. 17.

2. In thoſe Miracles which Chriſt himſelf wrought by the Spirit of God; which was ſo eminent a Teſtimony of the Spirit of God, that the reſiſting of the Evidence of thoſe Miracles, and the attributing of them to the Devil, is by our Saviour call'd a Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and ſuch a Sin as ſhall never be pardoned; becauſe Miracles being the higheſt Atteſtation that can be given to the Divinity of any Perſon, or his Doctrine; whoever reſiſts this Evidence, reſiſts his laſt remedy; and ſuch a Perſon muſt needs remain in his Infidelity, becauſe there is nothing more that can be done for his Conviction.

3. The

Volume XII.

3. The third eminent Teſtimony which the Holy Spirit gave to Chriſt, was in the great Miracle of his *Reſurrection from the dead*; and hence it is that the great Miracle of Chriſt's *Reſurrection*, which was the higheſt Atteſtation to the Divinity of his Perſon, and the grand Confirmation to his Doctrine, is frequently in Scripture, in a moſt peculiar manner, aſcribed to the Spirit of God. *Rom.* 1. 4. *and was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holineſs*, that is, by thoſe Miracles which he wrought by the Holy Ghoſt, and by his *Reſurrection from the dead.* And ſo *Rom.* 8. 11. *The Spirit of him that rais'd up Chriſt from the dead.* 1 Pet. 3. 18. *Being put to death in the fleſh: but quickned by the Spirit.*

4. In the Effuſion of the Spirit upon the Apoſtles, who were to preach Chriſt and his Doctrine to the World; and that it might carry its Evidence along with it, God poured forth his Spirit upon thoſe who were to be the Publiſhers of it; by which Spirit they were

were endued with ſeveral miraculous Powers and Gifts, to convince the World of the truth of the Doctrine which they Preached. And with relation to this, I think, it is that the Apoſtle ſaith, 1 *Cor.* 2. 4, 5. *And my ſpeech, and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wiſdom; but in demonſtration of the Spirit, and of Power: That your faith ſhould not ſtand in the wiſdom of men; but in the power of God*; that is, they did not uſe human Eloquence to perſwade men, but deliver'd the Goſpel with all plainneſs: And that which made thoſe plain Diſcourſes ſo powerful, were thoſe powerful demonſtrations of the Divine Spirit, which appear'd in thoſe miraculous Gifts wherewith they were endowed. I am ſure *Origen* underſtands this Text ſo. And ſo likewiſe the Apoſtle 1 *Theſſ.* 1. 5. ſpeaks to the ſame purpoſe, that *the Goſpel came not unto you in word only: but alſo in power, and in the holy Ghoſt, and in much aſſurance*; that is, they did not only ſpeak *words* to men, but the Doctrine which they Preached, was atteſted in a powerful manner by the Holy Ghoſt, in thoſe extraordinary Gifts which were beſtowed

Sermon V.

Volume XII.

ſtowed upon them, which was a great evidence to their hearers, and gave them great aſſurance of the truth of what they delivered. I think this is the meaning of thoſe two places; but I will mention two other which are more unqueſtionable, *Acts* 5. 32. where *Peter*, and the reſt of the Apoſtles tell the high Prieſts and their Officers, what Evidence they had for what they Preached, concerning the Reſurrection and Aſcenſion of Chriſt. *We are his witneſſes of theſe things; and ſo is alſo the holy Ghoſt whom God hath given to them that obey him.* Not only they themſelves had ſeen what they preached: but to confirm their Teſtimony, the Holy Ghoſt was poured forth upon them in Miraculous gifts. And *Heb.* 2. 3, 4. *How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation, which at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him, God alſo bearing them witneſs, both with ſigns and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the holy Ghoſt, according to his own will?* So the Holy Ghoſt gave Teſtimony to the truth of the Doctrine which the Apoſtles Preached, by thoſe gifts which

which he endowed them withal, and thoſe Miracles which he enabled them to work. Sermon IV.

And I doubt not but with relation to the Teſtimony which the Spirit of God gave to Chriſt by the Miracles he wrought by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, I ſay I doubt not, but that with relation to this teſtimony it is, that the Apoſtle ſaith he was *juſtified in the Spirit*, 1 Tim. 3. 16. *Great is the myſtery of Godlineſs: God was manifeſt in the fleſh, juſtified in the Spirit.* That is, the miraculous Power of the Spirit which appeared in him, and did accompany his Doctrine, did juſtifie him to the World, and vindicate him from being an impoſtor and deceiver.

From all which it appears, that the Teſtimony which the Holy Spirit gives to Chriſt and his Doctrine, was the Miracles which he and his Apoſtles wrought by the Spirit of God: and if we will take our forms of ſpeaking from Scripture; this is that which may moſt properly be call'd the Teſtimony of the Spirit to the truth of the Goſpel. But I deny not but beſides

Volume XII.

beſides this outward Evidence, which the Spirit of God gives to the truth of the Goſpel, with reſpect to which, the Faith of the Goſpel is in a peculiar manner attributed to the Spirit of God; there is likewiſe an inward Efficacy and Operation of the Spirit of God upon the minds of men. Therefore,

Secondly, Faith is in a peculiar manner attributed to the Spirit of God in reſpect of the inward Efficacy and Operation of the Divine Spirit upon the hearts and minds of thoſe who ſincerely and effectually believe and entertain the Goſpel; I ſay who ſincerely and effectually believe and entertain the Goſpel; that is, who ſo believe and entertain the Goſpel as to obey it, and comply with it in their hearts and lives. For I doubt not but that there is ſo much Evidence for the Truth and Divine Authority of the Goſpel, as is in it ſelf ſufficient, without any peculiar Operation of the Spirit of God, to ſilence all oppoſers, and to convince them ſo far as that they cannot have any ſufficient reaſon to disbe-

disbelieve it: but withal, I do not think, that this Faith doth become an abiding and effectual perſwaſion in any Perſon, without the ſpecial Operation of the Holy Ghoſt. Now that the Spirit of God can work this effectual Perſwaſion in the mind of Man, cannot be doubted by any Man who conſiders the vaſt power and influence which the Spirit of God, who made our Souls, and knows the Frame of them, can have upon the mind of Man: all the difficulty is about the manner of it; how this Faith is wrought in us by the Spirit of God. Now altho' it were ſufficient for us to know the thing, tho' we were ignorant of the manner how it is done, and we might very well reſt ſatisfied in this; that the Spirit of God works this Faith in us, tho' we did not know how it does it; yet becauſe many have taken upon them to ſtate and determine the particular manner how it is done, it will be requiſite, in order to the rectifying ſome miſtakes about it, to enquire more particularly into this matter. Sermon V.

Volume XII.

Now all the ways that have been aſſigned, or which, I think, we can eaſily imagine, may be reduced to one of theſe *ſix* heads. When we ſay the Spirit of God works Faith in us, we muſt conceive it to be done ſome or all of theſe ways.

1. By ſtrengthning the Faculty, that is, raiſing and enabling our underſtanding to yield aſſent to the Goſpel. Or,

2. By enlightning and diſcovering the Object, that is, the concluſion to be believed.

3. By propounding to us the Arguments, or Evidence whereby we may be perſwaded of it. Or,

4. By holding our minds intent upun this Evidence, till it have wrought its Effect upon us. Or,

5. By removing the Impediments which hinder our aſſent. Or,

6. By

Sermon V.

6. By farthering and helping forward the Efficacy of this Perſwaſion upon our Hearts and Lives. That the Spirit can work Faith in us, any, or all theſe ways, ſo far as they are conſiſtent with one another, I make not the leaſt doubt. For what Man who believes the infinite Power of the Divine Spirit, can make the leaſt queſtion, whether it can raiſe and heighten our Faculties above their natural and ordinary pitch? or whether it can diſcover an Object to us, with the greateſt clearneſs and ſatisfaction? or whether it can offer to our minds the beſt Arguments, and the higheſt Evidence that a thing is capable of? or whether it can hold our minds intent upon the conſideration of any thing? or whether it can remove all hinderances and impediments? or whether it can make the perſwaſion of any truth effectual? No Man in reaſon can doubt of the poſſibility of theſe. But the queſtion is, what reaſon we have to aſſert this, or that particular manner? and what neceſſity, and convenience there is from experience, or evidence of Scripture, ſo to do?

First of all, There ſeems no neceſſity of aſſerting the firſt; tho' I will not contend with any man that ſhall. For if this be true, that our underſtandings are naturally endowed with a ſufficient power to aſſent to any truth that is ſufficiently propounded to them; then there can be no neceſſity to aſſert, that the Spirit of God doth in the work of Faith, raiſe and elevate our underſtandings above their natural pitch. But I think it may eaſily be proved, that our underſtandings are naturally endowed with a ſufficient power to aſſent to any truth that is ſufficiently propounded to them; and that in ſuch a caſe nothing hinders the aſſent of men, but their own perverſeneſs and obſtinacy, which uſually proceeds from oppoſition of their Luſts, or Paſſions, or intereſt, to the truth which is propounded to them. For if mens underſtandings be not naturally endowed with a ſufficient power to yield aſſent to the Goſpel, when it is ſufficiently propounded to them, how can it be mens duty to believe it? or what Juſtice can condemn them for unbelief? But tho' there

there be no neceſſity of aſſerting, that God doth always ſtrengthen and elevate the underſtanding of thoſe who believe; yet there is no reaſon to deny, but that God may do this when he pleaſeth, and poſſibly he often doth it. Sermon V.

God is ſaid in Scripture *to enlighten the eyes of our underſtandings*, which we may, if we pleaſe, underſtand in this ſenſe; altho' that may be done by propounding ſuch truths to us as we were ignorant of before, and could not have diſcovered, unleſs they had been revealed.

Secondly, The *Second* way whereby the Spirit of God may be conceived to work Faith in us, is by enlightning and diſcovering the Object, or thing to be believed. In the caſe we are ſpeaking of, the Object, or thing to be believed, is the Goſpel: now we may imagine the Spirit of God may work a Faith or Perſwaſion of this in us, by revealing or diſcovering to us this Propoſition, that the Goſpel is true. But this I need not ſpeak much to, becauſe I do not know any that

pretend to have a particular and immediate revelation from God, that the Goſpel is true. So that tho' God may do this when he pleaſeth, yet I do not know any who aſſert this to be the way whereby Faith is wrought in men.

Thirdly, The Spirit of God may be conceived to work Faith in us, by propounding and offering to us ſuch Arguments and Evidence, as are apt to perſwade us of the truth of the Goſpel. And this the Spirit of God, which inſpired the Writers of the Scripture, doth mediately by the Scriptures, and thoſe Characters of Divinity which are in the Doctrines contained in them; and by thoſe Miracles, which are there credibly related to be wrought by the Spirit of God, for the confirmation of that Doctrine. And beſides this, the Spirit of God may, when he pleaſeth, and probably often doth, immediately ſuggeſt thoſe Arguments to our minds, and bring them to our remembrance.

4. The

Sermon V.

Fourthly, The Spirit of God may be conceived to work Faith in us, by holding our minds intent upon this Evidence, till it hath wrought its Effect upon us. And this I do not doubt, but the Spirit of God, out of his abundant Grace and Goodneſs to men, often doth; and I believe many men have found their minds kept intent upon ſuch conſiderations, as have mightily prevailed upon them, and been effectual to perſwade them to entertain and obey the Goſpel; and muſt acknowledge that their minds were awakened by ſuch conſiderations, and made attentive to them, beyond their own inclinations to think upon ſuch things; and in ſuch a ſtrange and unaccountable manner, as they cannot in reaſon but attribute to ſome ſuperiour influence, *viz.* to the Holy Spirit of God.

Fifthly, By removing the Impediments which hinder our effectual aſſent to the Goſpel. And in this and the laſt particular, I conceive, the work of the Spirit of God in the producing of Faith, principally to conſiſt; I ſay

Volume XII.

in theſe principally, not abſolutely excluding the former. The great impediment to the belief and entertainment of the Goſpel, is the prejudice which the minds of men are apt to conceive againſt it, either upon account of their Education in a contrary Religion, or upon account of their Luſts, or ſome worldly intereſt, to which the Goſpel is oppoſite. Now theſe are as ſo many bars upon the underſtandings of men, to keep out the truth from entering into them. The prejudice of a contrary Education, is a monſtrous obſtacle to Religion. When men have believed otherwiſe from their Youth, and have had contrary Principles implanted in them in their tender years, and have all their lives been poſſeſt with contrary apprehenſions of things; the cleareſt truths that can be offer'd to them, come upon infinite diſadvantage; their underſtandings are tinctur'd, and put falſe colours upon every thing that is repreſented to them. And this was the caſe of the Jews, when the *Meſſias* came; they were poſſeſt with prejudices againſt his mean appearance, and had faſhion'd to themſelves another kind of

of *Meſſias*, that ſhould be a glorious temporal Prince; and had been brought up in this apprehenſion; and this made them ſo invincibly obſtinate againſt the reception of him; tho' the whole Nation, when he came, were in expectation of him. And this was alſo the caſe of the Gentiles, when the Goſpel was firſt Preached to them, they had been Educated in a contrary Religion, and were poſſeſt with quite other apprehenſions, which made the paſſage of the Goſpel infinitely difficult. And I doubt not but that in the firſt Publiſhing of the Goſpel, the Spirit did remarkably work upon the minds of men, for the removing of theſe prejudices, and thereby making way for the entertainment of the Goſpel. And tho' this prejudice be not now upon us in theſe parts of the World, who are brought up in the Chriſtian Religion; yet the Luſts and Intereſts of men are now great obſtacles to the effectual entertainment of the Goſpel; and the Spirit of God doth many times eminently appear in the reſtraining and conquering the Luſts of men, and removing thoſe other

Sermon V.

Volume XII.

ther prejudices which hinder them from embracing the Truth.

Sixthly, The laſt way whereby the Spirit of God may be ſaid to work in us an effectual belief of the Goſpel, is by farthering, and helping forward the Efficacy of this perſwaſion upon our hearts and lives, in the firſt work of Converſion and Regeneration, and in the progreſſive work of Sanctification afterward; both which the Scripture doth every where attribute to the Spirit of God, as the Author and Efficient Cauſe. The Faith which *purifies the heart*, and *conquers the world*, and *works by love*, hath this Effect from the Spirit of God. Hence we are ſaid to be *ſanctified by the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt*, *and the belief of the truth*, and *to be kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto ſalvation.*

Thus I have ſhewn you, as briefly and clearly as I could, how the Spirit of God doth concur to the begetting of this Divine Faith and Perſwaſion in us, and conſequently in what reſpects *Faith* may be ſaid to be the gift of God.

I ſhall only draw *two* or *three* Inferences from this Diſcourſe. Sermon V.

I. we may learn from hence to attribute all the good that is in us, or that we do in any kind, to God. Every good thing is from God; ſo St. *James* tells us, that *every good and perfect work comes down even from the father of lights.* Much more are we to aſcribe to the free grace of God all the revelation of ſupernatural Truth, which we cannot poſſibly come to the knowledge of, unleſs God of his free grace and goodneſs be pleaſed to diſcover it to us. And ſo likewiſe are we to aſcribe to God, and the Operation of his Holy Spirit upon our Hearts, our belief of thoſe truths, and aſſent to them. Conſidering the corruption and degeneracy of human Nature, and the oppoſition of the Luſts and Prejudices of men to Divine Truth, we ſtand in need of the grace of God, and the Operation of his Spirit upon our hearts, to bring us to a firm aſſent to the Goſpel: for as *fleſh and blood could not reveal theſe truths to us*, ſo neither is it very apt to aſſent to them when they are revealed.

In

Volume XII.

In the Phraſe of Scripture, all good is attributed to God; and all ſpiritual good to the Holy Spirit of God working in us, and aſſiſting us to the doing of it. As on the other hand, the Scripture attributes all thoſe ſins that are committed in the World, to the influence of evil Spirits. *He that committeth ſin is of the Devil.* And tho' we do not know many times, how the Spirit of God worketh a good inclination in us, yet it is ſafe to follow the Phraſe of Scripture, and to aſcribe all good to God, as in ſome way or other the Author of it.

II. This doth not excuſe the Infidelity of men, that *Faith is the gift of God.* For tho' no man doth believe without ſome influence of the Divine Spirit upon his heart, yet this does by no means excuſe thoſe who believe not, any more than it is an excuſe to the infidelity of men, that the Scripture attributes it to the Devil, as in ſome ſort the cauſe of it. He is ſaid *to blind the eyes of them that believe not, leſt the light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt ſhould ſhine into them.* But the

the unbelief of men is a fault for all this; becauſe the Devil cannot blind our minds, unleſs we conſent to it: he can only ſuggeſt falſe Principles to us; but we may chuſe whether we will entertain them or not: he can only tempt us to reject the truth; but we may chuſe whether we will do ſo or not. In this we are faulty, becauſe we may reſiſt the Devil, and quench or repel thoſe fiery darts which he caſts into our minds: but if we will conſent to his temptations, and ſuffer our ſelves to be blinded by him, the fault of our unbelief is our own, as well as his; and we are guilty of the infidelity which we ſuffer him to tempt us to.

So on the other hand tho' *Faith* be *the gift of God*; yet thoſe that believe not are faulty upon this account, that they quench and reſiſt the bleſſed motions of God's Spirit, and the influence and Operation of the Spirit of God, which accompany the Truth of the Goſpel to the minds of men, and produce their Effect wherever they are not oppoſed and rejected by the prejudice and perverſeneſs of men.

III. Let

Volume XII.

III. Let us depend upon God for every good gift; and earneſtly beg the aſſiſtance and influence of his holy Spirit, which is ſo neceſſary to us to beget Faith in us, and to preſerve, and to make it effectual upon our hearts and lives. Bread is not more neceſſary to the ſupport of our natural life, than the holy Spirit of God to our ſpiritual life.

For our encouragement to aſk this gift of God's Holy Spirit, our Saviour hath told us, that God is very ready to beſtow him upon us. No Father upon Eearth is more ready to give bread to his Children that cry after him, than God is to give his Spirit to thoſe that heartily and earneſtly beg it of him. So our Saviour aſſures us, *Luke* 11. 11, 12, 13. *If a ſon ſhall aſk bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a ſtone? or if he aſk a fiſh, will he for a fiſh give him a ſerpent? Or if he ſhall aſk an egg, will he offer him a ſcorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more ſhall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that aſk him?*

And

And now I have done with the *firſt* thing that I propounded, which was to open the Nature of Faith to you in general. I have been the longer upon this, becauſe I thought it very material, and important to the ſettling of right apprehenſions in us concerning Religion, and Divine things; and I have all along endeavoured to make things as eaſie and plain as the nature of the ſubject would permit. And tho' probably many things that I have ſaid, might not be within the full reach and comprehenſion of all capacities, yet becauſe I hoped they might be uſeful and beneficial to ſome at leaſt, I could not think the other conſideration a ſufficient reaſon why I ſhould wholly omit them, and paſs them by; remembring what St. *Paul* ſays, that *he was a debter to the wiſe*, as well as *the unwiſe*. And St. *Peter* tells us, that St. *Paul* in his Epiſtles wrote *many things, which were hard to be underſtood* by ſome Perſons; yet becauſe thoſe things might be of uſe to others, the Spirit of God did not think fit to omit the writing of them. What remains I ſhall reſerve for another Diſcourſe, with which I ſhall conclude this Subject. Sermon V.

SERMON VI.

The Efficacy, Uſefulneſs, and Reaſonableneſs of *Divine Faith.*

The Sixth Sermon on this Text.

HEB. XI. 6.

But without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God.

IN Diſcourſing on theſe words, I have diſpatch'd the *firſt* thing which I propos'd, *viz.* to give an account of the Notion and Nature of Faith in general; under which I have largely treated of a Religious or Divine Faith in particular.

Volume XII.

The *Second* thing which I propos'd, and to which I now proceed, is to confirm the truth of the Propoſition which I laid down from the words, *viz.* That Faith is the great Principle of Religion. I told you that theſe words, *Without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*, do not only imply that Faith is a neceſſary condition, without which men cannot be Religious: but likewiſe that it is a Cauſe and Principle of Religion. Without Faith a Man cannot be Religious: and where there is true Faith, it will have this Effect upon men to make them Religious. Therefore I ſhall diſtinctly ſpeak to theſe *two* things.

Firſt, That without Faith there can be no Religion.

Secondly, That where there is a true Faith, it will have this influence upon men to make them Religious.

Firſt, That without Faith there can be no Religion. And this will appear by enquiring into the Nature of all human actions, whether Civil, or Religious:

ligious: and this is common to both of them, that they ſuppoſe ſome kind of Faith or Perſwaſion. All human actions have an order and reference to ſome end, and conſequently ſuppoſe ſome knowledge of the end, and of the means whereby it may be attained. So that unleſs a Man do believe and be perſwaded that ſuch a thing is ſome way or other good for him, and conſequently deſireable and fit to be propounded as an end, and that this end is attainable, and the means which he uſeth are probable and likely for the attaining of this end, he will ſit ſtill and do nothing at all about it. So that without Faith it is impoſſible to do any thing; he that believes nothing, will do nothing. Sermon VI.

To inſtance firſt in Civil actions, and the common affairs and concernments of life; all theſe are done by virtue of ſome Faith or Perſwaſion concerning them. For example, Husbandry, or Merchandiſe; no Man will apply himſelf to theſe, but upon ſome belief or perſwaſion of the Poſſibility and Neceſſity, or at leaſt uſefulneſs and convenience of theſe to the ends

of life. No Man would plow or ſow, if he did not believe that there were ſuch a thing as the growing of Corn, and that it is neceſſary for the ſupport of our lives, and if he were not perſwaded of the probability of reaping ſome Fruit and Benefit of his pains and induſtry. No Man would traffick to *Turkey* or the *Indies*, if he did not believe there were ſuch places, and that they afforded ſuch Commodities, and that he might have them upon ſuch terms as might recompence the Adventure of his charge and pains. And ſo in all other actions of Life.

So it is in Divine and Religious things, nothing is done without Faith. No Man will worſhip God, unleſs he believe there is a God; unleſs he be perſwaded *there is ſuch a Being*, which by reaſon of its Excellency and Perfection, may challenge our veneration; and unleſs he believe the goodneſs of this God, that *he will reward thoſe that diligently ſerve him.* For all acts of Religion being reaſonable, they ſuppoſe at leaſt an Object and an End; that there is a God to be worſhipped, and that it is not in vain to ſerve him;

him. This Faith is neceſſary to natural Religion. And in caſe God do diſcover and reveal his will to men, no Man can obey the will of God, unleſs he be perſwaded that God hath ſome way or other made known his will; and be perſwaded likewiſe as to the particular inſtance wherein his Obedience is required, that this is God's Will. For inſtance, no Man will obey the Precepts of the Bible as Divine Laws and Commands, unleſs he be perſwaded that the Doctrine contained in the Holy Scriptures is a Divine Revelation. So likewiſe no Man can entertain Chriſt as the *Meſſias* and Saviour of the World, and yield Obedience to his Laws, unleſs he believes that he was *ſent of God*, and *ordained by him to be a Prince and a Saviour.* So that you ſee the neceſſity of Faith to Religion. Sermon VI.

Secondly, I ſhall ſhew the influence that a Divine Faith hath upon men to make them Religious. A true Divine Faith ſuppoſeth a Man ſatisfied and perſwaded of the Reaſonableneſs, and Neceſſity of being Religious; that it is reaſonable for every Man to be ſo,

Volume XII.

and that it is neceſſary to his intereſt. Now there needs no more to be done to put a Man upon any thing, but to ſatisfie him of theſe two things; that the action you perſwade him to is reaſonable; that is, poſſible and fit to be done: and that it is highly his intereſt to do it; that is, if he do it, it will be eminently for his advantage; if he do not do it, it will be eminently to his prejudice, and he is a loſt and undone Man. If you can once poſſeſs a Man, that is in any degree ſober and conſiderate, with theſe perſwaſions, you may make him do any thing of which he is thus perſwaded. Now a true Divine Faith ſuppoſeth a man ſatisfied and perſwaded of all this.

1. Of the reaſonableneſs of Religion. He that verily believes there is a God, believes there is a Being that hath all Excellency and Perfection, that is infinitely Good, and Wiſe, and Juſt, and Powerful, that made and preſerves all things. Now he that believes ſuch a Being as this, cannot but think it reaſonable that he ſhould be Eſteemed, and Honoured, and Adored

dored by all thoſe Creatures that are ſenſible and apprehenſive of theſe Excellencies; that ſeeing he is infinitely Good, and the Fountain of all Being, and all the Bleſſings we enjoy, we ſhould love ſo great a Benefactor, and thankfully acknowledge his Goodneſs to us; not only by conſtant praiſe of him, but by an univerſal Obedience to his Will, and a chearful Submiſſion to his Pleaſure. For what more reaſonable than Gratitude? That ſeeing he is infinitely Wiſe and Powerful as well as Good, we ſhould truſt in him, and depend upon him in all conditions, and ſeek to him for what we want. For what more reaſonable than to place our confidence in him, who is able and willing to do us good; and to ſue to him who knows our wants, and is ready to ſupply them? And ſeeing he is truth it ſelf, and hath been pleaſed to reveal his Will to us; what can be more reaſonable than to believe all thoſe Diſcoveries and Revelations which *God, who cannot lie*, hath made to us, and to comply with the intention of them? And ſeeing he is

Sermon VI.

Volume XII.

the Original Pattern of all Excellency and Perfection; what can be more reaſonable than to imitate the Perfections of the Divine Nature, and to endeavour to be as like God, as we can? And theſe are the ſumm of all Religion. So that whoever firmly believes a God, and that he hath revealed and made known his will to the World, cannot but be fully ſatisfied and perſwaded of the reaſonableneſs and equity of Religion, and all thoſe duties which Religion requires of us; and conſequently of the poſſibility of performing all thoſe Duties which Religion requires of us, by the Aſſiſtance of the Grace and Strength which God is ready to afford us, if we beg it of him. For no Man that believes the Goodneſs of God, (which every Man does that believes a God,) can think that he will make it our duty to do any thing which he hath left us in an utter impoſſibility of doing.

2. A true Divine Faith ſuppoſeth a Man ſatisfied and perſwaded of the neceſſity of Religion; that is, that it is neceſſary to every Man's intereſt to

to be Religious; that it will be highly for our Advantage to be ſo, and eminently to our Prejudice to be otherwiſe; that if we be ſo we ſhall be happy, if we be not, we ſhall be miſerable, and undone for ever. And every Man that believes a God, and the Revelations which he hath made, cannot but be fully ſatisfied of this. Sermon VI.

And this will appear upon theſe *two* accounts.

1. From the Nature and Reaſon of the thing. And,

2. From the Promiſes and Threatnings of God's word.

1. From the Nature and Reaſon of the thing. Every Man that believes a God, muſt believe him to be the Supream good; and the greateſt Happineſs to conſiſt in the enjoyment of him; and a ſeperation from him to be the greateſt miſery. Now God is not to be enjoyed, but in a way of Religion. Holineſs makes us like to God; and likeneſs will make us love him; and love will make us happy

in

in the enjoyment of him; and without this it is impoſſible to be happy.

Volume XII. There can be no happineſs without pleaſure and delight; and we cannot take pleaſure in any thing we do not love; and there can be no love, without a likeneſs and ſuitableneſs of diſpoſition. So long as God is good, and we evil; ſo long as he is pure, and we unholy; ſo long as he hates ſin, and we love it; there can be no happy entercourſe, no agreeable Communion, and delightful Society between God and us. So that if we be holy, happineſs will reſult from this temper: and if we be wicked, we are neceſſarily and unavoidably miſerable. Sin ſeparates between God and us, and hinders our Happineſs; and it is impoſſible that a wicked Man ſhould be near God, or enjoy him. God and a Sinner are ſuch two unequal matches, that it is impoſſible to bring them together; for *what fellowſhip hath Righteouſneſs with Unrighteouſneſs? or what Communion hath light with darkneſs?*

2. Every Man which believes the Revelations which God hath made, cannot

cannot but be ſatisfied, how much Religion is his intereſt from the Promiſes and Threatnings of God's Word. God in his Word hath in plain and expreſs terms promiſed everlaſting Glory and Happineſs to them that obey him; and hath threatned wicked men with dreadful and eternal puniſhments; *to them that by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek for glory, and honour, and immortality,* he hath promiſed *eternal life*: *but to them that obey not the truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs,* he hath threatned *indignation*; *and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh.* Now if we believe the Goſpel, which aſſures us of another life after this, and a future Judgment which will determine all men to a ſtate of everlaſting happineſs, or miſery, we cannot but know it to be our intereſt, by all poſſible means to endeavour to attain the Happineſs which God hath promiſed, and to avoid the miſery which he hath threatned. All men naturally deſire happineſs, and dread miſery and deſtruction; and theſe deſires and fears are intimate to our Natures, and can never be ſeparated from them; becauſe they

Sermon VI.

Volume XII.

they flow immediately from thoſe Principles of ſelf-love, and ſelf-preſervation, which are deeply rooted in every man's heart, and are woven into the very make and frame of his Nature, and will laſt as long as our Beings. And ſo long as theſe Principles remain in us, there's no Man that is firmly perſwaded of the Promiſes and Threatnings of the Goſpel, but muſt believe it to be his higheſt intereſt to be Religious. Fear and hope are the two Paſſions which govern us; hope is as it were the Spur that quickens us to our duty, and fear is the Curb that reſtrains us from ſin; and the greater the good hoped for, or the evil that is feared, the greater power and influence theſe paſſions have upon us. Now there cannot be a greater good, than compleat and everlaſting happineſs; nor a greater evil, than extream and eternal miſery. So that whoever believes the Promiſes and Threatnings of the Goſpel, hath his hope raiſed to the expectation of the greateſt good and happineſs in caſe of Obedience; and his fears extended to the expectation of the greateſt evil and miſery in caſe of

of final impenitency and diſobedience. And a true Divine Faith doth contain in it both this hope and fear: for a Faith in the Promiſes of the Goſpel is nothing elſe, but the hopes of eternal life; and a belief of the Threatnings of the Goſpel, is nothing elſe, but the fear of Hell and eternal miſery. So that a firm belief of the Promiſes and Threatnings of the Goſpel, muſt needs have as great influence upon men to make them Religious, as the higheſt hopes and greateſt fears can have: and thoſe men that are not moved by the hopes of the greateſt good, nor by the fears of the greateſt danger, are not to be wrought upon in human ways, nothing will prevail with them.

Thus I have ſhewn you, what influence a Divine Faith hath upon Religion; for as much as whoever believes there is a God, and that the Scriptures are the Word of God, is fully ſatisfied and convinced how reaſonable it is, and how much it is his intereſt to be Religious. I come in the laſt place to the Application of this Diſcourſe.

Firſt,

Volume XII.

Firſt, This ſhews why there is ſo little of true Religion in the World; 'tis for want of Faith, without which it is impoſſible for men to be Religious. Men are not firmly perſwaded that there is a God; that there is a Being above them that is Omniſcient, and knows every thing that they do, and takes notice of every word, and thought, and action; that is ſo Good, and ſo Powerful, as to make thoſe happy that love and obey him; and ſo Juſt and Powerful, as to make thoſe miſerable who hate him, and rebel againſt him. Men are not perſwaded that their Souls are immortal; and that there is another life after this, in which men ſhall be happy or miſerable to all Eternity, according as they demean themſelves in this World. Men are not firmly perſwaded that the Scriptures are the Word of God, and that the Precepts and Prohibitions of the Bible are the Laws of a great King, who will amply reward the obſervance of his Laws, and ſeverely vindicate the breach and violation of them. Men do not believe that the Promiſes and Threatnings of God's

God's word are true, and that every jot and tittle of them ſhall be accompliſh'd. For did men believe theſe things, they would be Religious; they would not dare to live in any known ſin or impiety of life: unleſs we can preſume that a Man can be ſeriouſly unwilling to be happy, and have a longing deſire to be miſerable; and undone for ever. For whoever believes the Principles of Religion, and the Precepts and Promiſes; and Threatnings that are contained in this Holy Book, and yet after all this can continue in ſin, he muſt not only put off the Principles of a reaſonable Creature, but muſt quit the very inclinations of his Nature; that is, he muſt knowingly refuſe that which he naturally deſires, which is happineſs; and muſt embrace that; which of all things that can be imagined he moſt abhors, and that is miſery.

So that if men were verily perſwaded, that the Great, and Holy, and Juſt God looks continually upon them, and that 'tis impoſſible to hide from him any thing that we do,

Volume XII.

they would not dare to commit any ſin in his ſight, and under the Eye of him who is their Father and Maſter, their Sovereign and their Judge, their Friend and Benefactour, who is inveſted with all theſe Titles, and ſtands to us in all theſe Relations, which may challenge reverence and reſpect. Did men believe the Holineſs and Juſtice of God, that he hates ſin and will not let it go unpuniſh'd, would they venture to make him a Witneſs of their Wickedneſs, who they believe will be the Avenger of it? Did men believe that they ſhall live for ever, and that after this ſhort life is ended, they muſt enter upon Eternity; that when they leave the World, there are but two ways which all men muſt go, either into life everlaſting, or into eternal and intolerable torments; did men believe this, would they not with all poſſible care and diligence endeavour to attain the one, and avoid the other? Were men poſſeſt with a belief of Eternity, how would they deſpiſe temporal and tranſitory things? how would they neglect the Concernments of this Life, and overlook the little impertinencies of

of time, and refer all their thoughts and cares and endeavours to Eternity? This great and important intereſt would ſo fill their minds, and take up their thoughts, and employ their utmoſt cares and endeavours and diligence, that they would ſcarce regard, or ſpeak, or think of any thing elſe; they would be reſtleſs and impatient, till they had ſecured this grand affair and concernment; they would ſubordinate all the Intereſts of this World to that of the other, and make all the concernments of time to ſtoop to the grand concernment of Eternity. Thus men would do, were they but firmly perſwaded that there is another life after this, to which this bears no proportion. Sermon VI.

Did men believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and to contain matters of the higheſt importance to our everlaſting Happineſs; would they neglect it and lay it aſide, and ſtudy it no more than a Man would do an Almanack out of date, or than a Man, who believes the attaining a Philoſopher's Stone to be impoſſible, would ſtudy thoſe Books that treat

Volume XII.

that ſhould go about to entreat men to believe any thing, or to charge them ſo to do, before he hath convinc'd them by ſufficient Arguments, that it is reaſonable to do ſo, would, in my opinion, take a prepoſterous courſe. He that entreats or chargeth a Man to do any thing, ſuppoſeth that he can do the thing if he will: but a Man cannot believe what he will; the Nature of a human Underſtanding is ſuch, that it cannnot aſſent without Evidence, nor believe any thing to be true, unleſs it ſee reaſon ſo to do, any more than a Man can ſee a thing without light. So that if the deareſt Friend that I have in the World, ſhould beg of me with the greateſt importunity; or any Man that hath the greateſt Authority over me, ſhould lay his ſevereſt Commands upon me to believe a thing, for which I ſee no reaſon, I could not do it; becauſe nothing can command aſſent, but Evidence. So that he that would perſwade men to believe either the Principles of Natural Religion, or any Divine Revelation, muſt convince them of the truth of them: for it is unreaſonable to deſire a Man

Man to believe any thing, unleſs I give him good reaſon why he ſhould. Sermon VI.

And this being the proper courſe which is to be taken, there are two ſorts of Perſons to whom I ſhall apply my ſelf in this Exhortation: thoſe who do not believe theſe things; and thoſe who are perſwaded of them: to the former, in order to the begeting of Faith in them; to the latter, in order to the ſtrengthning and confirming of their Faith.

Thoſe who do not believe, are of two ſorts: either ſuch as do poſitively disbelieve theſe things, and make it their buſineſs to arm themſelves againſt them with all the Arguments they can; who are ſo far from believing a God, or any Divine Revelation, that they endeavour to perſwade themſelves of the contrary, that there is no ſuch thing; or elſe they are ſuch as are indifferent about theſe matters. They have received the Principles of Religion by their Education, and they have nothing to ſay againſt them, nor for them; they

Volume XII.

never conſider'd them, nor the proper conſequences of them; they neither believe, nor disbelieve them upon any reaſonable account.

Now all theſe are to be dealt withall in the ſame way: for whatever will convince the Disbeliever, will much more perſwade the indifferent, and confirm the weak. For Faith is to be ſtrengthned by the ſame Arguments by which it is wrought. Therefore I ſhall apply my ſelf to convince Unbelievers; and every one may apply thoſe Arguments which I uſe to this purpoſe, for the ſtrengthning of their own Faith.

But before I come to thoſe Arguments, I intend to offer for the conviction of thoſe who do not believe, I think it convenient to endeavour, if poſſible, to remove a violent, and I think unreaſonable prejudice which men have received againſt all thoſe who endeavour to make Religion reaſonable. As if *Bellarmine* had been in the right, when he ſaid "That "Faith was rather to be defined by "ignorance than by Knowledge. The plain

plain *Engliſh* of which is, that it is for want of Underſtanding that men believe the Goſpel; and if the World were but a little more knowing and wiſe, no body would be a Chriſtian. I know not how it comes to paſs, whether through the artifice of the Popiſh party, who *hate the light, leſt it ſhould reprove them, and make them manifeſt*; or thro' the Ignorance of too many well-meaning Proteſtants; I ſay, I know not how it comes to paſs, but ſo it is, that every one that offers to give a reaſonable account of his Faith, and to eſtabliſh Religion upon rational Principles, is preſently branded for a *Socinian*; of which we have a ſad Inſtance in that incomparable Perſon Mr. *Chillingworth*, the glory of this Age and Nation, who for no other cauſe that I know of, but his worthy and ſucceſsful attempts to make Chriſtian Religion reaſonable, and to diſcover thoſe firm and ſolid foundations upon which our Faith is built, hath been requited with this black and odious Character. But if this be *Socinianiſm*, for a Man to enquire into the Grounds and Reaſons of Chriſtian Religion, and to endeavour to

Sermon VI.

Volume XII.

give a ſatisfactory account why he believes it, I know no way but that all conſiderate inquiſitive men, that are above Fancy and Enthuſiaſm, muſt be either *Socinians* or *Atheiſts*.

I cannot imagine how men can do greater diſſervice to Religion, than by taking it off from the rational and ſolid Baſis upon which it ſtands, and bearing the World in hand, that men ought to believe without reaſon: for this is to turn Faith into Credulity, and to level Chriſtian Religion with the vileſt and moſt groundleſs Enthuſiaſms that ever were in the World. Indeed if we had only to deal with *Henry Nicholas*, and *Jacob Behman*, who fight againſt us in the dark, not with Reaſons and Arguments, but with inſignificant Words, and obſcure Phraſes; we might make a ſhift to bear up againſt them with this Principle, and we might charge them to believe us, as they do us to believe them, without giving them any reaſon for it: but if we were to deal with *Celſus*, or *Julian*, or *Porphyry*, or ſome of our modern *Atheiſts*, we ſhould ſoon find how vain it would be

be to go about to cajole them with Phraſes, and to gain them over to Chriſtianity, by telling them that they muſt deny their Reaſon, and lay aſide their Underſtandings, and believe they know not why. If the great Pillars of Chriſtianity, the ancient Fathers, had taken this courſe in their Apologies for Chriſtian Religion, it had never triumph'd over *Judaiſm* and *Paganiſm* as it did; and whoever hath Read over thoſe Defences and Vindications of Chriſtian Religion againſt *Jews* and *Heathens*, which were written in the firſt Ages of the Church, eſpecially the Books of *Origen* againſt *Celſus*, and *Euſebius* his Book *de Demonſt.* and *Præparat. Evangel.* ſhall find that they did very ſolicitouſly endeavour to ſatisfie the World by all rational ways, both of the truth and reaſonableneſs of Chriſtian Religion. And if that was a good way then, it is ſo now; and never more neceſſary than in this Age, which I fear hath as many Atheiſts and Infidels, that go under the name of Chriſtians, as ever were in any Age ſince Chriſtian Religion was firſt planted in the World.

Sermon VI.

But

Volume XII.

But my deſign at preſent is not to perſwade men particularly to the belief of Chriſtianity (that I intend hereafter, by God's Aſſiſtance, to ſpeak to) but to perſwade men to the belief of Religion in general. So that all that I ſhall do at preſent, ſhall be, as briefly as I can, to offer ſome Arguments and Conſiderations to perſwade men to the Belief of the Principles of Natural Religion, and of the Revelation which God hath made of his Mind and Will in the Holy Scriptures.

I. To perſwade men to believe the Principles of Natural Religion, ſuch as the Being of God; the immortality of the Soul; and future Rewards after this Life. I ſhall offer theſe *two* Conſiderations.

Firſt, That it is moſt reaſonable ſo to do.

Secondly, That it is infinitely moſt prudent.

I. As

Sermon VI.

I. As to the Being of God. Do but conſider theſe *two* things which are undeniable; That there is a World however it came; and that Mankind do generally conſent in a confident perſwaſion that there is a God, whatever be the cauſe of it. Now theſe *two* things being certain, and not liable to any Queſtion, let us enquire whether a reaſonable account can be given of theſe without a God.

1. Suppoſing there be no God, How came this vaſt and orderly Frame of the World? There are but two ways that can be imagined. Either it was from Eternity always of it ſelf; or it began ſometime to be. That it ſhould be always of it ſelf; tho' it may be imagined of the Heavens, and the Earth, which as to the main, are permanent, and continue the ſame; yet in things that ſucceed one after another, it is altogether unimaginable. As in the Generation of men, there can be no doubt, whether every one of them was from another, or ſome of themſelves. Some of them muſt be of themſelves: for whatever number

Volume XII.

ber of Cauſes be imagined in orderly Succeſſion, ſome of them muſt have no Cauſe, but be of themſelves. Now that which is of it ſelf, and the Cauſe of all others, is the firſt. So that there muſt be a firſt Man; and the Age of Man being finite, this firſt Man muſt have a beginning. So that an infinite Succeſſion of Men ſhould have been, is impoſſible; and conſequently, that men were always. But I need not inſiſt much upon this, becauſe few or none of our modern Atheiſts pitch upon this way. Beſides that *Ariſtotle*, who is reputed the great aſſerter of the Eternity of the World, doth acknowledge an Infinite progreſs and Succeſſion of Cauſes to be one of the greateſt Abſurdities.

Suppoſe then the World began ſome time to be; it muſt either be made by Counſel and Deſign, that is, produced by ſome Being that knew what it did, that did Contrive it and Frame it as it is; which it is eaſie to conceive a Being that is infinitely Good, and Wiſe, and Powerful, might do: but this is to own a God: or elſe the Matter of it being ſuppoſed to have

have been always, and in continual motion and tumult, it at laſt happened to fall into this order, and the parts of Matter after various agitations, were at length entangled and knit together in this order, in which we ſee the World to be. But can any Man think this reaſonable to imagine, that in the infinite variety which is in the World, all things ſhould happen by chance, as well and as orderly as the greateſt Wiſdom could have contrived them? Whoever can believe this, muſt do it with his Will, and not with his Underſtanding. Sermon VI.

But ſeeing it muſt be granted that ſomething is of it ſelf; how eaſie is it to grant ſuch a Being to be of it ſelf, as hath other Perfections proportionable to neceſſary exiſtence; that is infinitely Good, and Wiſe, and Powerful? And there will be no difficulty in conceiving how ſuch a Being as this ſhould make the World.

2. This likewiſe is undeniable, that mankind do generally conſent in a confident

Volume XII.

fident perſwaſion that there is a God, whatever was the cauſe of this. Now the reaſon of ſo univerſal a conſent in all places and ages of the World, muſt be one, and conſtant: but no one and conſtant reaſon of this can be given, unleſs it be from the Frame and Nature of Man's Mind and Underſtanding, which hath the notion of a Deity ſtampt upon it; or which is all one, hath ſuch an Underſtanding, as will in its own free uſe and exerciſe find out a God. And what more reaſonable than to think, that if we be God's Workmanſhip, he ſhould ſet this mark of himſelf upon us, that we might know to whom we belong? And I dare ſay, that this account muſt needs be much more reaſonable and ſatisfactory to any indifferent Man, than to reſolve this univerſal conſent into Tradition, or State-policy, both which are liable to inexplicable difficulties, as * I have elſewhere ſhewn at large.

See Vol. 1. Serm. 1. *of the Sermons publiſh'd by his Grace himſelf, where the Arguments here briefly nam'd, are handled at large.*

II. As to the immortality of the Soul. Suppoſing a God, who is an infinite Spirit: it is eaſie to imagine the poſſibility of a finite Spirit, and ſuppoſing

poſing the Goodneſs of God; no Man can doubt, but that when he made all things, he would make ſome beſt; and the ſame Goodneſs which moved him to make things, would be a reaſon to continue thoſe things for the longeſt duration they are capable of. Sermon VI.

III. As to future rewards. Suppoſing the Holineſs and Juſtice of God, that *he loves, Righteouſneſs, and hates iniquity*; and that he is the Magiſtrate and Governour of the World, and concerned to countenance Goodneſs, and diſcourage Sin; and conſidering the promiſcuous Diſpenſation of his Providence in this World, and how *all things happen alike to all*; it is moſt reaſonable to conclude, that after this life, men ſhall be puniſh'd and rewarded.

Secondly, It is infinitely moſt Prudent. In matters of great concernment a prudent Man will incline to the ſafeſt ſide of the queſtion. We have conſidered which ſide of theſe queſtions is moſt reaſonable: let us now think which is ſafeſt. For it is certainly

Volume XII.

tainly moſt prudent to incline to the ſafeſt ſide of the queſtion. Suppoſing the reaſons for, and againſt the Principles of Religion, were equal, yet the danger and hazard is ſo unequal, as would ſway a prudent Man to the affirmative. Suppoſe a Man believe there is no God, nor life after this; and ſuppoſe he be in the right, but not certain that he is, (for that I am ſure in this caſe is impoſſible;) all the advantage he hath by this Opinion, relates only to this World and this preſent time: for he cannot be the better for it when he is not. Now what advantage will it be to him in this life? He ſhall have the more liberty to do what he pleaſeth; that is, it furniſheth him with a ſtronger temptation to be intemperate, and luſtful, and unjuſt; that is, to do thoſe things which prejudice his Body and his Health, which cloud his Reaſon, and darken his Underſtanding, which will make him Enemies in the World, and will bring him into danger. So that it is no Advantage to any Man to be vicious: and yet this is the greateſt uſe that is made of Atheiſtical Principles

ples; to comfort men in their vicious courſes. But if thou haſt a mind to be virtuous, and temperate, and juſt, the belief of the Principles of Religion will be no obſtacle, but a furtherance to thee in this courſe. All the advantage a Man can hope for by disbelieving the Principles of Religion, is to eſcape trouble and Perſecution in this World, which may happen to him upon account of Religion. But ſuppoſing there be a God, and a life after this; then what a vaſt difference is there of the conſequences of theſe opinions! As much as between finite and infinite, time and eternity. Sermon VI.

Secondly, To perſwade men to believe the Scriptures, I only offer this to men's conſideration. If there be a God, whoſe Providence governs the World, and all the Creatures in it, is it not reaſonable to think that he hath a particular care of men, the nobleſt part of this viſible World? And ſeeing he hath made them capable of eternal duration; that he hath provided for their eternal Hap-

Volume XII.

pineſs, and ſufficiently revealed to them the way to it, and the terms and conditions of it? Now let any Man produce any Book in the World, that pretends to be from God, and to do this; that for the Matter of it is ſo worthy of God, the Doctrines whereof are ſo uſeful, and the Precepts ſo reaſonable, and the Arguments ſo powerful, the truth of all which was confirmed by ſo many great and unqueſtionable Miracles, the relation of which hath been tranſmitted to Poſterity in Publick and Authentick Records, written by thoſe who were Eye and Ear Witneſſes of what they wrote, and free from ſuſpicion of any Worldly Intereſt and Deſign; let any produce a Book like to this, in all theſe reſpects; and which, over and beſides, hath, by the Power and Reaſonableneſs of the Doctrines contained in it, prevail'd ſo miraculouſly in the World, by weak and inconſiderable means, in oppoſition to all the Wit and Power of the World, and under ſuch diſcouragements, as no other Religion was ever aſſaulted with

with; let any Man bring forth ſuch a Book, and he hath my leave to believe it as ſoon as the Bible. But if there be none ſuch, as I am well aſſur'd there is not, then every one that thinks God hath revealed himſelf to men, ought to embrace and entertain the Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, as revealed by God. Sermon VI.

And now having preſented men with ſuch Arguments and Conſiderations as are proper, and I think ſufficient to induce belief, I think it not unreaſonable to entreat and urge men diligently and impartially to conſider theſe matters; and if there be weight in theſe Conſiderations to ſway reaſonable men, that they would not ſuffer themſelves to be byaſſed by prejudice, or paſſion, or intereſt, to a contrary perſwaſion. Thus much I may with reaſon deſire of men: for tho' men cannot believe what they will, yet men may, if they will; conſider things ſeriouſly and impartially, and yield or with-hold their aſſent, as they

Volume XII.

ſhall ſee cauſe, after a thorow ſearch and examination.

If any Man will offer a ſerious Argument againſt any of the Principles of Religion, and will debate the matter ſoberly, as one that conſiders the infinite conſequences of theſe things one way or other, and would gladly be ſatisfied, he deſerves to be heard what he can ſay: But if a Man will turn Religion into raillery, and confute it by two or three bold jeſts; he doth not make Religion, but himſelf ridiculous, in the opinion of all conſiderate men; becauſe he ſports with his life.

So that it concerns every Man that would not trifle away his Soul, and and fool himſelf into irrecoverable miſery, with the greateſt ſeriouſneſs to enquire into theſe things, whether they be ſo or no, and patiently to conſider the Arguments that are brought for them.

And when you are examining theſe matters, do not take into conſideration

any ſenſual or worldly intereſt: but deal fairly and impartially with your ſelves. Think with your ſelves that you have not the making of things true and falſe; that the Principles of Religion are either true or falſe, before you think of them. The truth of things is already fixt; either there is a God, or no God; either your Souls are immortal, or they are not; either the Scriptures are a Divine Revelation, or an Impoſture; one of theſe is certain and neceſſary, and they are not now to be alter'd. Things will not comply with your conceits, and bend themſelves to your intereſts. Therefore do not think what you would have to be: but conſider impartially what is. * Sermon VI.

* *Of this ſee more in the Sermon above mentioned.*

And if upon enquiry, you be convinc'd that it is the greateſt Reaſon and Prudence to believe that there is a God, and a Future State, and that the Scriptures are the Word of God; then meditate much of theſe theſe things; attend to the proper conſequences of ſuch a perſwaſion; and reſolve to live as becomes thoſe

Volume XII.

who believe there is a God, and another life after this, and that it is beſt for you to obey the Precepts of his Word, being perſwaded that whatever is there promiſed in caſe of Obedience, or threatned in caſe of Diſobedience, will certainly be accompliſh'd.

And labour to ſtrengthen your ſelf in this belief; becauſe Faith is the ſpring of all rational actions, and the root of all other Graces; and according to the ſtrength and weakneſs of Faith, your Holineſs and Obedience and Graces will flouriſh or decay.

And becauſe the matters of Faith do not fall under our Senſes, and the things of another World are inviſible, and at diſtance, and conſequently not ſo apt to affect us, as preſent and ſenſible things, we ſhould take the more pains with our ſelves, that by revolving frequently in our minds the thoughts of God, and repreſenting to our ſelves the Happineſs and Miſery of another World,

World, they may have as great an Effect upon us, as if they were present to us, and we saw them with our bodily Eyes.

SERMON VII.

Of the Chriſtan Faith, the Means of its Conveyance, and our Obligation to receive it.

The Firſt Sermon on this Text.

JOHN XX. 31.

But theſe are written, that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his Name.

I Have largely Diſcourſed concerning the general Nature of Faith, and more particularly concerning the Faith which is truly Divine and Religious; in the latitude of which is con-

contained a Perſwaſion concerning the Principles of Natural Religion, the Being of God, the Immortality of the Soul, and a Future State; and a Perſwaſion of the Divine Revelation of the Scriptures, and the matters contained in them. Now among matters of Divine Revelation, the Doctrine of the Goſpel is a principal part; which is the laſt and moſt perfect Revelation which God hath made to the World, by his Son Jeſus Chriſt; and a firm belief and perſwaſion of this, is that which is call'd *Chriſtian Faith*, or *the Faith of the Goſpel*; and which by way of Eminency, is uſually call'd *Faith* in the new Teſtament.

Now Chriſtian Faith is not oppoſed to a Divine Faith, but is comprehended under it; as being a principal and eminent part of Divine Faith, but not all that which may be call'd Divine Faith. Chriſtian Faith ſuppoſeth a Belief of the Principles of Natural Religion; and a Belief of thoſe Revelations which God formerly made under the old Teſtament: But it doth only formally contain in it

it a Belief of the Gospel, *viz.* That Revelation which God hath in these last days made to the World by his Son *Jesus Christ*. The Heathens who were destitute of Divine Revelation, did only believe the Principles of Natural Religion; and the generality of them did not believe those, but in a very imperfect manner. The *Jews, to whom were committed the Oracles of God*, did superadd to the belief of the Principles of Natural Religion, the belief of such Revelations as God was pleased to make to them under that Dispensation. Christian Faith superadds to both the former, a belief of the Revelation of the Gospel. Sermon VII.

I shall now therefore by God's assistance, endeavour to open to you the Nature of Christian Faith from these words; in which you have these *three* things considerable.

First, The End of committing the Gospel to Writing, which was to perswade men to believe in Christ, to propagate and continue Christian Faith in the World; *these things are written that you might believe that Jesus*

Volume XII.

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: And by Faith to bring men to a participation of those Benefits, and the Salvation which Christ was the Author of; *And that believing, ye might have life through his Name. These are written,* ταῦτα, *these,* which may either refer to σημεῖα, *these signs or miracles,* referring to the former Verse, *and many other signs,* &c. but *these signs,* or *miracles are written* to confirm *Jesus* to be the Person he pretended to be, the *Messias*, the Son of God, and consequently to confirm the truth of the Doctrine which he deliver'd; that by this confirmation, men might be induced to believe him to be the true *Messias*, and to give entertainment to his Doctrine.

Or else (which is very probable) the word ταῦτα may refer to the whole History of the Gospel, in which you have an account of the Life of Christ, and the Doctrine which he taught, and the Miracles which were wrought for the Confirmation of it. And so we may look upon these two Verses as a conclusion, of the whole History of the Gospel

Gospel writ by the four Evangelists. For as for the Chapter following, it seems not to be written by St. *John* himself, but by the Church, probably as *Grotius* Conjectures by the Church of *Ephesus*, where he had resided, and whom he had acquainted with the particulars which are there set down; the principal of which is, the Prediction of our Saviour concerning his long life, for the sake of which the rest of the story seems to be brought in; which particular was not fit to be recorded till after his Death; I say, it seems probable that St. *John* ended his Gospel here, and that the last Chapter was added by others, as the last Chapter of the *Pentateuch* was added by some other after the death of *Moses*; and the last Chapter of *Joshua* after his death. And this seems very evident from the 24*th.* of the Chapter; where, after a relation of our Saviour's Prediction, concerning *the Disciple whom Jesus loved*, 'tis added, *This is the Disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things*, (that is the foregoing History of the Gospel) *and we know that his testimony is true*; Which seems plainly

Sermon VII.

Volume XII.

ly to be ſpoken by ſome other Perſons: for it were improper for him to ſay this of himſelf, *We know that his teſtimony is true.*

So that here ſeems to be the end of the Hiſtory of Chriſt which St. *John* wrote; and theſe two Verſes ſeem to be the concluſion of the whole Goſpel written by the four Evangeliſts; and then the ſenſe of them will be this; *Many other ſigns truly did Jeſus in the preſence of his Diſciples, which are not written in this Book*; that is, The Diſciples were Witneſſes of many other Miracles which Chriſt wrought, which they did not think neceſſary to ſet down in this Book, that is, in this Hiſtory of Chriſt written by the four Evangeliſts: *But theſe are written, that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his Name*; that is, Theſe things which are recorded in this Hiſtory, this account which is here given of the Life and Actions and Doctrine and Miracles of Chriſt, is ſufficient to bring men to the Faith of the Goſpel, to ſatisfie men that *Chriſt* was the

the *Meſſias*, the Son of God, and conſequently that his Doctrine is true. Sermon VII.

And that this concluſion doth refer to the whole Hiſtory of the Goſpel written by the four Evangeliſts, I am induced to believe upon theſe *two* accounts.

1. Becauſe St. *John*'s Goſpel doth not ſeem to be intended for a Hiſtory of the Life and Actions of Chriſt: but an Appendix to the Hiſtory, which had been written before by the other Evangeliſts, and to ſupply only what they had omitted. Therefore you ſhall find that he gives no account of the Genealogy or Birth of our Saviour, nor of his Sermon upon the Mount, which did contain the ſum of his Doctrine, nor of any of his Miracles or his other Diſcourſes which are related by the other Evangeliſts; nor doth he relate any more of the Hiſtory of his Life, than was juſt neceſſary to bring in, and connect thoſe things which he thought fit to ſuperadd to the former Hiſtory. So that conſidering how defective this Goſpel, taken by it ſelf,

is

Volume XII.

is in the moſt eſſential parts of the Hiſtory of the Life, and Doctrine, and Actions of Chriſt, no Man can think that St. *John* did intend this for a full and ſufficient account of the Life and Doctrine and Miracles of Chriſt; or that upon this imperfect relation, in which he had knowingly omitted many of the moſt material and conſiderable things belonging to the Hiſtory of Chriſt, he could expect that men ſhould receive full ſatisfaction concerning him. Therefore I think it is highly reaſonable, and almoſt neceſſary to conclude, that when he ſays, *Theſe things are witten, that you might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God*; he does not ſolely refer to the Goſpel which was written by himſelf: but to the whole Hiſtory of the Goſpel, which was put together into one Book or Volume, which was compleated by this Appendix.

2. Another reaſon I have for this, which doth much ſtrengthen this conjecture, is what I find in *Euſebius*, in the 18. *Chapter* of the *third* Book of his Hiſtory, where he tells us to this

this purpose, "That St. *John*, who "lived the last of the Apostles, did "revise what they had written of the "History of Christ, and added his "Gospel ~~as an~~ Appendix to the rest. Sermon VII.

I have insisted the longer upon this, that no Man might think, when St. *John* says, *These things were written that ye might believe*, that his Gospel taken alone and by it self is a sufficient account of Christ, and contains all that was requisite to bring men to believe on him. This is the *first* thing in the words, the End of committing the Gospel to writing.

Secondly, You have here the Nature of Christian Faith described; it is *a believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*; that is, that he is the true *Messias* propheſied of in the Old Testament, and promised as the Saviour of the World; and that he is the Son of God, who came from the Father into the World, and took our Nature upon him, that he might teach us, and go before us in the way to eternal Happiness.

Thirdly, The bleſſed Effect of this Faith, or the Benefit that redounds to us upon believing, *That believing, ye might have life through his Name*; that is, that upon theſe Terms and Conditions, you might be made partakers of all thoſe Bleſſings and Benefits which Chriſt, the Saviour of the World hath purchaſed for us, which are here ſet forth to us in the Name of *Life*; it being uſual in the Phraſe of Scripture, to expreſs to us thoſe things which are moſt excellent and deſirable by *Life*. Now the Principal Benefits which Chriſt hath purchaſed, and which in Scripture we are ſaid to be made partakers of by believing, are Regeneration, Juſtification or Pardon of ſin, and eternal Life and Salvation; and the two firſt of theſe, as well as the laſt, are called *Life* in Scripture. Regeneration, (in which I include the continuance and progreſs of this work, which is ſanctification) that is, a new life, *Rom.* 6. 4. it is called *newneſs of life*. And we are ſaid to have this Life by Faith, *Gal.* 2. 20. *And the life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the Faith of the Son*

Son of God. And *Col.* 2. 12. *Buried with him in Baptism, wherein also you are risen with him*; that is, regenerated and born to a new life. How? *by the Faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead*; that is, by believing the Power of God, who raised up Christ from the Dead, for the confirmation of the truth of the Gospel, 1 *John* 5. 1. *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.* So likewise Justification is call'd *Life*. While we are under sentence of Condemnation, we are dead in Law: but being justified and pardon'd, we are restored to life. So the Apostle expresseth it, *Rom.* 5. 18. *So by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.* And that we are *justified by Faith*, the Scripture tells us so frequently, that I shall not cite any Texts for it. Sermon VII.

And then eternal Life and Salvation; and this is the consummation of all, and I doubt not but is here principally intended in the Text by the word *Life*. So that the meaning of this expression, *that believing, ye might have life through his Name*, is, that

by the Faith of the Goſpel, ye might be renewed, and pardoned, and ſaved; tho' I think that the laſt, *viz.* eternal Life and Salvation is principally, tho' not ſolely intended, as will appear by comparing this place with theſe parallel Texts, *John* 3. 15. *That whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh: but have eternal life.* And, ver. 36. *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life.* John 5. 24. *He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that ſent me, hath everlaſting life.* 1 Pet. 1. 9. *The end of your faith, even the ſalvation of your ſouls.*

Thus I have as briefly as I well could, explained to you the meaning of the words, which I have done the more fully, that you may ſee how theſe Obſervations which I ſhall raiſe from them, are contained in them. The Obſervations are theſe.

Firſt, That Writing is the way which the Wiſdom of God hath pitched upon, as the ſtanding way, to convey the Knowledge of the Goſpel to the World. *Theſe things are written.*

Secondly,

Sermon VII.

Secondly, That all things neceſſary to be believed in order to Salvation, are contained in the Goſpel. *Theſe things are written that ye might believe, and believing might have life:* but if any thing neceſſary to be believed by Chriſtians, in order to eternal Salvation, were omitted, then the Goſpel would be written to no purpoſe, and would fail in the end for which it was written.

Thirdly, That the Miracles related in the Goſpel, are a proper and ſufficient Means, or Argument, to bring men to Chriſtian Faith. For this is the narroweſt and moſt reſtrained ſenſe in which we can take the words; *Theſe things*, that is, *Theſe miracles are written that ye might believe*, &c. Now if St. *John* by the Spirit of God did record Miracles to this end, we may conclude that they are proper and ſufficient for this end.

Fourthly, That a credible Hiſtory does give men ſufficient aſſurance of matter of fact, and ſuch as we may ſafely build a Divine Faith upon. For

if theſe Miracles were recorded for this end, *that men might believe*, then a credible Hiſtory or Relation that ſuch Miracles were done, is ſufficient to aſſure us that ſuch Miracles were wrought; and upon this aſſurance we may build our Faith: otherwiſe it had been in vain to have recorded theſe Miracles to this end.

Fifthly, That we are not now a-days deſtitute of a ſufficient ground of Faith; becauſe we have theſe Writings credibly conveyed to us, which contain the Doctrine of the Goſpel, and the Relation of the Miracles written for the confirmation of it.

Sixthly, That men now a-days, thoſe to whom the Goſpel comes, are under an Obligation to believe; or which is all one, that now a-days men may be guilty of ſuch a ſin as unbelief: for now a-days we may have ſufficient grounds of Faith.

Seventhly, That to believe that *Jeſus* is the *Chriſt*, the Son of God, is truly and properly Chriſtian Faith. This is the deſcription which is here given of it,

it, that it is a *believing, that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God.*

Eighthly, That to believe that *Jeſus* is the *Chriſt* the Son of God, is truly and properly ſanctifying, and juſtifying, and ſaving Faith, by this *Faith* we have *life. Theſe things were written, that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through his Name.*

Theſe Obſervations are all virtually contained in the words. The greateſt part of them I ſhall very lightly paſs over, and ſpeak but briefly to them, becauſe I intend mainly to inſiſt upon the *two* laſt; in the handling of which, I ſhall open to you the Nature of Chriſtian Faith, and ſhew you, that the Faith, which is here deſcribed, is that which is truly and properly juſtifying and ſaving.

Firſt, that Writing is the way which the Wiſdom of God hath pitched upon, as the ſtanding way of conveying the Knowledge of the Goſpel

Volume XII.

to the world. This is matter of fact, and for the proof of it we have the evidence of the thing. The Goſpel *de facto* was written, and this Writing is conveyed down to us, and is the Inſtrument with God hath in all Ages ſince the Apoſtles times, that is, ſince the Eye and Ear Witneſſes of the Miracles of Chriſt and his Doctrine ceaſed, made uſe of to convey to the World the Knowledge of the Goſpel. And here it were proper to ſhew what advantage this way of conveyance of the Goſpel hath above Oral tradition: but that I have already done * in ſome former diſcourſes where I ſhewed at large, that this way of conveyance is a more univerſal and diffuſive, a more certain and liable to leſs impoſture and falſification, a more equal and uniform, and a more humane way of conveyance than Oral Tradition; ſo that I ſhall not inſiſt longer upon this.

* *See the foregoing Sermons in this* Vol.

Secondly, That all things neceſſary to be believed by Chriſtians in order to Salvation, are contained in the

the Written Goſpel: or elſe how could St. *John* in reaſon ſay, that *theſe things were written*, to this end, *that men might believe and be ſaved*; if theſe things be not ſufficient to this end? which certanly they are not, if any thing neceſſary to be believed in order to Salvation be left out. The Papiſts being urged with this Text, to prove the ſufficiency of the written Word, in oppoſition to thoſe Traditional Doctrines which they pretend to be neceſſary over and beſides the written Word, tell us, that St. *John* doth not here ſpeak of the Doctrine of Chriſt; but only of his Miracles; Theſe were Written to confirm our Faith of the *Meſſias*; but the Doctrine of Chriſt was not all written, but left to the Apoſtles to be deliver'd by mouth to their ſucceſſors, and ſo down to poſterity. But I have ſhewn before, that the neceſſary Doctrines of the Goſpel, as well as the Miracles, are comprehended in theſe things which St. *John* ſays *were written*. Beſides that it will be very hard for any man to deviſe a convenient reaſon, why Miracles, as well as Doctrines, might

Sermon VII.

not

Volume XII. not have been left to the Apoſtles, to have been Traditionally deliver'd down to poſterity without writing. For Doctrines may as well be committed to writing, as Relations of Miracles: and Miracles may be with as much eaſe, and certainty, and convenience in all reſpects, delivered down to poſterity by an Oral Tradition, as Doctrines may.

Thirdly, That the Miracles related in the Goſpel, are a proper and ſufficient means to bring men to chriſtian Faith. That they are ſo, it is a good ſign, that God did work them to this end, and afterward commit them to writing for this very reaſon, that the knowledge of them might be conveyed to poſterity, and there might ſtill remain in the World a proper and ſufficient Argument to perſwade men to believe; and we may well imagine, that God would not do any thing, but what is very proper and ſufficient for its end. Now that Miracles were wrought by the Divine Power purpoſely to this end, and that they are in reaſon a very ſufficient atteſtation to a Perſon,

ſon, and confirmation of the Doctrine which he brings, I have largely ſhewn elſe-where *; and that all along both in the Old and New Teſtament, God did impower *Moſes* and the prophets, Chriſt and his Apoſtles, to work Miracles, to bring men to Faith, and that this was the principal Argument whereby thoſe who did believe, were wrought upon.

* *See the foregoing Sermons in this Vol*

Fourthly, That credible Hiſtory doth give men ſufficient aſſurance of Matter of Fact; and ſuch aſſurance, as we may ſafely build a Divine Faith upon. We freely believe innumerable things, which are ſaid to have been done many Ages before we were born, and make not the leaſt doubt of them, only upon the credit of Hiſtory: ſo that if the Relation of Miracles be but granted to be a credible Hiſtory, we may upon the credit of the Relation, ſafely believe that ſuch Miracles were wrought; and if ſuch Miracles were wrought, we may ſafely believe the Doctrine to be from God, for the confirmation of which they were wrought;

Volume XII. wrought; and conſequently, a Divine Faith may be ſafely built upon ſuch an aſſurance of Miracles, as we may have from a credible Hiſtory and Relation.

Fifthly, That we are not now a-days, deſtitute of a ſufficient Ground of Faith; becauſe the Doctrine of the Goſpel hath ſtill the ſame confirmation that it had, *viz. Miracles*: only we who live at this diſtance from the time when, and the place where they were wrought, have the knowledge of them conveyed to us, and come to be aſſured of them in another way. Thoſe who lived in the Age of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, had aſſurance of Miracles from their own Senſes: and we now are aſſured of them by credible Hiſtory and Relation. Now tho' theſe ways be not equal; yet they are both ſufficient to beget in us an undoubted aſſurance, and ſuch as no prudent Man hath any reaſon to doubt of. For a man may be as truly and undoubtedly certain, that is, as well ſatisfied, that a thing was done, from the credit of Hiſtory, as from his own ſenſes.

ſes. I make no more doubt whether there was ſuch a Perſon as *Henry* the VIII. King of *England*, than I do whether I be in this place. Sermon VII.

Sixthly, That now a-days, thoſe to whom the Goſpel comes, are under an obligation to believe; or that now a-days there is ſuch a ſin as unbelief of the Goſpel. And I the rather note this, becauſe ſome well-wiſhers to *Atheiſm*, who out of prudence and regard to their own, ſafety, chuſe rather ſecretly to undermine Religion, than openly to deny it I grant indeed, that in our Saviour's time, when ſuch great Miracles were wrought, thoſe who ſaw thoſe Miracles (which they think no body did) were under an obligation to believe, and guilty of a great ſin in not believing the Goſpel: but now a-days, when we ſee no ſuch Miracles wrought for the confirmation of the Goſpel, there lies no obligation upon any Man to believe it; and that now there is no ſuch ſin as unbelief. Now any man may with half an Eye ſee the conſequence of this aſſertion: for being once admitted,

admitted, it doth as certainly deſtroy Chriſtian Religion, as if men ſhould deny that there was any ſuch Perſon as *Jeſus Chriſt*, or that he ever wrought any Miracles: for if to disbelieve the Goſpel be no ſin, and conſequently brings a Man into no danger; but on the other hand dangers and perſecutions do attend the Belief and Profeſſion of it; it were the greateſt folly in the World for any man to believe; unleſs this poſſibly may be greater, for a man who does not believe it, to obey and live according to it. And if this were true, it were the greateſt imprudence that can be, for any Man to be a Chriſtian. And if that were once admitted, there's all the reaſon in the world that Chriſtianity ſhould be baniſh'd and exſtirpated, not only as uſeleſs and impertinent, but as a thing dangerous and pernicious to the welfare of Mankind.

I ſhall therefore briefly prove to you, that it is now one of the greateſt ſins that men are capable of, (except the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt) for thoſe who have the Goſpel ſufficiently propounded to them, to disbelieve

believe it; I ſay, except the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, which our Saviour tells us, was *blaſpheming the Spirit of God*, whereby he wrought his Miracles, and ſaying it was the Spirit of the Devil; and this ſin, men in a lower degree and proportion may now a-days be guilty of: for as the *Phariſees* who ſaw the works that Chriſt did, and acknowledged them to be Miracles, did commit the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, in aſcribing thoſe Miracles which were really wrought by the Power of the Holy Ghoſt, to the Power of the Devil; ſo men now a-days who own the Hiſtory of Chriſt's Miracles as true, may be guilty of the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, in a lower proportion, by malicious imputing thoſe Miracles to the Power of the Devil. Sermon VII.

But excepting the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, the greateſt ſin that men are now capable of, is to bisbelieve the Goſpel when it is ſufficiently propounded to them. Now the Goſpel is then ſufficiently propounded, when there are ſufficient grounds offer'd to perſwade men to the belief of it; and I have already proved, that we now have

Volume XII.

have ſufficient ground to believe the Goſpel; and if ſo, then whoſoever hath theſe grounds offer'd to him, is under an obligation to believe it: for every Man is bound to believe that, for which he hath ſufficient ground and reaſon; and every Man ſins who neglects his duty, that is, does not do that which he ſtands bound to do.

And not only whoever disbelieves the Goſpel, ſins in ſo doing, but farther, he commits the greateſt ſin that now men are capable of. I ſay *now* capable of: for I doubt not but that it was a ſin of a higher degree, for thoſe who ſaw Chriſt's Miracles to disbelieve, than it is for us who have only the relation of them. For by the ſame reaſon, that *he is more bleſſed that believes, and hath not ſeen*; a greater curſe belongs to him, *who hath ſeen, and yet doth not believe*; and conſequently ſuch a Perſon is guilty of a greater ſin. But becauſe we cannot now ſee the Miracles of Chriſt, the greateſt ſin that men in this Age are capable of, is to disbelieve the Goſpel confirmed by

by Miracles, whereof we are aſſur'd by credible Relation. For the ſin of disbelieving now hath theſe *two* aggravations. Sermon VII.

1. It is againſt ſufficient Light and Evidence: and in this it is equal to the ſins which are committed againſt Natural Light.

2. It is a ſin againſt the greateſt Mercies and Bleſſings that ever were offer'd to the World: and in this it exceeds the ſins againſt natural Light. Whoever disbelieves the Goſpel, he rejects the offer of eternal Life and Happineſs. And theſe two aggravations the Apoſtle puts together, *Heb.* 2. 3. *How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation, which at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him*! And if this be thus, it highly concerns us to enquire into the Nature of this Faith; and this brings me to the

Seventh Obſervation; That to believe that *Jeſus* is the *Chriſt*, the Son

of God, is truly and properly Chriſtian Faith. But the Conſideration of this, I ſhall leave to the next Opportunity.

SER-

SERMON VIII.

Of the Chriſtian Faith, which Sanctifies, Juſtifies, and Saves.

The Second Sermon on this Text.

JOHN XX. 31.

But theſe are written, that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his Name.

IN my former Diſcourſe upon theſe words, I propos'd *Eight* Obſervations from them, *Six* of which I have already diſpatch'd, deſigning to Diſcourſe of the remaining *two* more at large. I proceed therefore to the

Seventh Obſervation which I laid down, *viz.* That to believe that *Jeſus* is the *Chriſt*, the Son of God, is truly and properly Chriſtian Faith. This is the deſcription which is here given of Chriſtian Faith.

In Proſecution of this, I ſhall do theſe *two* things.

Firſt, Shew you what is included in *Believing that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God.*

Secondly, Prove that this is truly and properly Chriſtian Faith.

Firſt, What is included in *believing that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God?* It ſignifies a firm and effectual perſwaſion that *Jeſus*, that is, the Perſon the Hiſtory of whoſe life and death is related in the Goſpel, is *the Chriſt*, that is, the true *Meſſias*, promiſed and propheſied of in the Old Teſtament to be the Saviour of the World; and that he is *the Son of God*, that is, *the only begotten of the Father*, who was ſent by him into the World, and took

took our Nature upon him, that he might purchaſe eternal Happineſs for us, and inſtruct us, and go before us in the way to it. So that Faith is a firm and effectual perſwaſion of, or aſſent to the whole Goſpel. Faith ſignifies Chriſtian Religion, which comprehends an aſſent to the Doctrines of the Goſpel, and a ſuitable Life and Converſation. Sermon VIII.

I ſay a *firm* perſwaſion of this; for in the Phraſe of the New Teſtament, none are accounted true believers, or ſaid to have a true Faith in Chriſt, who do not firmly continue in this perſwaſion; and the owning and Profeſſion of it, notwithſtanding all the Sufferings and Perſecutions it might expoſe them to. And an *effectual* Perſwaſion, for none are ſaid truly to believe in Chriſt, who do not ſhew forth the proper and genuine Effects of this Faith, who do not live as they believe, and conform their Lives to that Doctrine, to the Truth whereof they profeſs an aſſent.

And hence it is that true Christians, that is, those who did fashion their Lives according to the Gospel, are called *believers*, and the sum of all Christianity is usually contained in this word *believing*, which is the great Principle of a Christian life; as in the Old Testament all Religion is expreſt by the *Faith of God*, so in the New, by *Faith in Christ*.

Now whosoever doth firmly and effectually entertain this Truth, that that *Jesus*, whom the Gospel declares to us, is the true *Messias*, and Saviour of the World, and the very Son of God, sent by him into the World for this purpose, that he might by his Doctrine instruct, and by the Example of his Life go before us in the way to eternal Happiness, and by the Merit and Satisfaction of his Death and Sufferings appease and reconcile God to men, and purchase for them the Pardon of their sins, and eternal Life, upon the conditions of Faith and Repentance, and sincere Obedience; I say, whosoever doth firmly and effectually entertain these Truths, will consequently

Sermon VIII.

sequently endeavour to obey the Precepts of his Doctrine, and to imitate the Example of his Life; and will expect Salvation, that is, the Pardon of his sins, and eternal Life from no other; because he is verily perswaded he is a Teacher, and a Saviour sent from God, that his Doctrine is true, and his Satisfaction available, and that the Rewards which he hath promised to those who believe and obey him, and the Punishments which he hath threatned to the unbelievers and disobedient, shall all certainly be fulfilled and accomplish'd. All this is included in *believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.* So Christian Faith, or the Faith of the Gospel, contains plainly in it these particulars.

1. An assent of the Understanding to this Truth, That *Jesus Christ* the Son of God, was a Person Commission'd from Heaven, and imployed by God to bring men to eternal Happiness. And this Fundamental is necessary to all the Subsequent Acts of Faith, and that upon which they depend.

2. An aſſent of the Underſtanding to the Truth of all thoſe things which this Perſon delivered to the World. So that if he tells us, that his Death hath made expiation for the ſins of men, upon the conditions of Faith and Repentance and Obedience, and that God by him doth command the World to do ſuch and ſuch things, and in caſe of Obedience will confer ſuch and ſuch Rewards upon men, but in caſe of Diſobedience will inflict ſuch Puniſhments upon them; we are to believe all this to be true; becauſe the Perſon who acquainted us with theſe things, was ſent by God, and imploy'd from Heaven upon this Meſſage.

3. And conſequently, a relying and depending upon him, and no other, for the conferring of theſe Benefits, and making good theſe Promiſes to us.

4. Obedience to all his Laws and Commands; becauſe believing them to be from God, we cannot but aſſent to them as good, and as laying an Obligation

gation upon us to yield Obedience to them: and if we do not Obey them, we are preſumed to Disbelieve them; for if we did truly and heartily believe them to be the Commands of God, we would obey them.

Now that Obedience of heart and life to the Precepts and Commands of the Goſpel, as well as an Aſſent of the underſtanding to the Truth of the Goſpel Revelation, and a truſting and relying upon the Merits of Chriſt, is included in the Scripture notion of Faith, will evidently appear to any that will conſider theſe texts. *Rom.* 1. 5. *By whom we have received grace and Apoſtleſhip for obedience to the Faith among all nations for his Name*; where the belief of the Goſpel is called *the obedience of Faith*. *Rom.* 10. 16. *But they have not all obeyed the Goſpel: for Eſaias ſaith, Lord, who hath believed our report?* But if Faith do not include Obedience, how could he prove that there were ſome that did not obey the Goſpel, becauſe *Iſaiah* ſaid, there were ſome that did not believe it? And ſo likewiſe by comparing, 1 *Tim.* 4. 10. where he is ſaid to be *the Saviour of them that believe*,

Volume XII.

believe, with *Heb.* 5. 9. where he is ſaid to be the *author of eternal Salvation unto all them that obey him.* As alſo by comparing, *Gal.* 5. 6. where it is ſaid, *For in Jeſus Chriſt, neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion: but faith which worketh by love*, with 1 Cor. 7. 19. *Circumciſion is nothing, and uncircumciſion is nothing: but the keeping of the commandments of God.* And ſo likewiſe by thoſe Texts, where *Unbelief* and *Diſobedience* are equivalently uſed. I will but mention one, *Heb.* 3. 12. The Apoſtle, from the Example of the *Iſraelites*, cautions Chriſtians againſt Unbelief, *Take heed, brethren, leſt there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.* And repeating the ſame caution in the next *Chapter*, at the 11. *verſe*, he varies the Phraſe a little, *Leſt any man fall after the ſame example of diſobedience*; the word is ἀπειθείας, which indeed our Tranſlators render *Unbelief*, but that confirms that which I bring it for, that *Diſobedience* and *Unbelief* are the ſame. And ſo likewiſe we find *Faith* and *Diſobedience* oppoſed

poſed frequently in Scripture. *John* 3. 36. *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life: and he that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life.* In the Greek it is, *he that obeyeth not the Son,* as you will ſee in the Margin of the Bible. 1 *Pet.* 2. 7. *Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be diſobedient, the ſtone which the builders diſallowed, the ſame is made the head of the corner.* And this doth likewiſe appear in all thoſe Texts, wherein Repentance, and our forgiving of others, and ſeveral other Acts of Obedience are made the conditions of our juſtification; or the omiſſion of them, ſins, as well as Faith. So that we cannot be ſaid *to be juſtified by faith alone,* unleſs that *Faith* include in it *Obedience.* I have inſiſted the longer upon this, becauſe the right underſtanding the Scripture notion of Faith in Chriſt, doth very much depend upon this: and if this one thing that the Scripture notion of Faith doth include in it Obedience to the Precepts of the Goſpel, were but well underſtood and conſidered, it would ſilence and put an end to thoſe infi-

Sermon VIII.

nite

Volume XII.

nite Controverſies about Faith and Juſtification, which have ſo much troubled the Chriſtian World, to the great prejudice of practical Religion, and Holineſs of Life.

Secondly, That this is truly and properly Chriſtian Faith. Which I ſhall prove by theſe *two* Arguments.

1. Becauſe it includes a belief of the whole Goſpel, or of all the Revelation which God hath made to the World by *Jeſus Chriſt*. And certainly there cannot be a more proper notion of Chriſtian Faith, than to believe the Revelation which God hath made by Jeſus Chriſt: but to believe that *Jeſus* is *the Chriſt, the Son of God*, doth include this. For whoſoever believes him to be the *Meſſias*, and the Son of God, believes him to have come from God, and to be Authorized and Commiſſioned by him to make known his mind to the World, and conſequently will believe whatever he delivers. For whoever believes the goodneſs and veracity of God, as every Man does that believes a God, cannot

not but aſſent to the truth of every thing which he is ſatisfied comes from God. Sermon VIII.

2. That *to believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt the Son of God*, is truly and properly Chriſtian Faith, or the Faith of the Goſpel, will appear, by conſidering how the Scriptures of the New Teſtament do conſtantly deſcribe to us the Faith of the Goſpel; and you ſhall find they do it, either by the very Phraſe in the Text, or other Phraſes or Metaphors equivalent to them, or elſe by a belief of that which is the great Argument and Confirmation of Chriſt's being the *Meſſias* the Son of God. Very often the Faith of the Goſpel is deſcribed by the very Phraſe in the Text, *believing that Jeſus is the Chriſt*, and that *he is the Son of God.* John 4. 41, 42. *And many more believed, becauſe of his own word; and ſaid unto the woman, Now we believe, not becauſe of thy ſaying: for we have heard him our ſelves, and know that this is indeed the Chriſt, the Saviour of the world.* John 6. 69. *And we believe and are ſure that thou art that Chriſt, the*

Volume XII.

the Son of the living God. John 11. 27. ſays *Martha* to Chriſt, *Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Chriſt, the Son of God, which ſhould come into the world.* Acts 8. 37. *I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God.* 1 John 3. 23. *And this is his commandment, that we ſhould believe on the Name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and love one another, as he gave us commandment,* that is, that we ſhould believe on him under this Name and Title of *Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God.* 1 John 5. 1. *Whoſoever believeth that Jeſus is the Chriſt, is born of God.* And ver. 5. *Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jeſus is the Son of God?* And ver. 10. *He that believeth on the Son of God,* that is, believeth *Jeſus* to be *the Son of God*; and ver. 13. *Theſe things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the Name of the Son of God.*

Sometimes the Faith of the Goſpel is deſcribed to us by other Phraſes that are tantamount to theſe; ſuch as ſig-

nifie

nifie that *he came from God*, and *was* Sermon
sent by him into the world, and was the VIII.
Messias whom they expected. *John* 3. 2. *Nicodemus* describes his Faith in Christ thus, *I know that thou art a teacher come from God.* John 6. 29. *This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent*, that is, that ye believe me to be sent from God. *John* 8. 24. *For if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins*, that is, If ye believe not that I am the *Messias*, whom you expect and look for. And so *John* 13. 19. *That ye may believe that I am he.* And *John* 11. 42. *That they may believe that thou hast sent me.* And *John* 16. 30. *By this we believe that thou camest forth from God.* And John 17. 8. *They have believed that thou didst send me.*

Sometimes the Faith of the Gospel is expresst by Metaphors equivalent to these expressions, as by *coming to Christ*, and *receiving him* as the true *Messias*, in several places; and sometimes by believing that which is the great Argument and Confirmation that *Christ* was

Volume XII.

was the true *Meſſias* the Son of God; that is, believing his Reſurrection from the dead. *Rom.* 4, 24. *To whom it ſhall be imputed* for Righteouſneſs, *if we believe on him that raiſed up Jeſus our Lord from the dead.* Rom. 10. 9. *If thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved.* Col. 2. 12. *Through the faith of the operation of God, who raiſed him up from the dead.* Where Faith is deſcrib'd by a belief of the Power whereby Chriſt was raiſed from the dead. And to mention no more, 1 *Pet.* 1. 21. *Who by him do believe in God, that raiſed him up from the dead.* Now the reaſon why the Faith of the Goſpel is deſcribed by the belief of *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection, is, becauſe whoever believes that *Chriſt* was raiſed from the dead, cannot but be ſatisfied, that this great Miracle was a ſufficient atteſtation that he was no Impoſtor, but that he was what he pretended to be, *viz. the Son of God*; and conſequently that he ought to be believed and obeyed in all things. And thus much may

ſuffice

ſuffice to have ſpoken to this *Seventh* Obſervation.

Sermon VIII.

Eighth Obſervation; That *to believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God,* is truly and properly Sanctifying, and Juſtifying, and Saving Faith. So the Text tells us, that this Faith gives us life; *But theſe are written, that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his Name,* that is, as I explain'd this Phraſe in the opening of the Text, that upon theſe terms and conditions, ye might be made partakers of all thoſe Bleſſings and Benefits, which Chriſt, the Saviour of the World, hath purchaſed, which are here ſet forth under the name of *Life*; it being uſual in the Phraſe of Scripture to ſet forth to us thoſe things which are moſt excellent and deſirable, by *Life*, which men value above all other things. Now the Principal Benefits which Chriſt hath purchaſed, and which we are ſaid to be made partakers of by believing, are,

1. Regeneration; under which I include the continuance and progreſs

greſs of this work, which is Sanctification.

2. Juſtification; by which I cannot find that the Scripture means any more than Pardon or Remiſſion of Sins.

3. Eternal Life; and this I think is principally, tho' not ſolely intended here in the Text, as I have ſhewn, by comparing the Text with other parallel Texts in the ſame Evangeliſt. *John* 3. 15. *That whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have eternal life.* And, ver. 36. *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life.* I ſay, I think eternal life is here principally intended, tho' this ſuppoſe the other, Regeneration, and Juſtification, before we can attain it, which may alſo very well be included here in the term *Life.* My Reaſons are theſe.

1. Becauſe I find in Scripture, that Regeneration and Juſtification are expreſt by the name of *Life. Rom.* 6. 4. our Regeneration is call'd *newneſs of life*, becauſe before we were *dead in ſins and treſpaſſes*; And *Rom.* 5. 18.

Juſtifica-

Juſtification is call'd *Juſtification of life*, becauſe while our ſins are unpardon'd, and we are under the ſentence of condemnation, we are dead in Law; but being juſtified and pardon'd, we are, as it were, reſtored to life again. Sermon VIII.

2. Becauſe in the Phraſe of Scripture we are ſaid to be Regenerate, and Sanctified, and Juſtified by Faith, as well as ſaved. 1 *John* 5. 1. *He that believeth that Jeſus is the Chriſt, is born of God.* Gal. 2. 20. *The life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God*; ſpeaking of the new life of Sanctification. And *Col.* 2. we are ſaid to be *riſen with Chriſt*, that is, born to a new Life, *by the Faith of the operation of God, that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead*; and *to be juſtified by Faith*, in innumerable places. So that it is very probable upon theſe accounts that the Evangeliſt here, when he ſays, that *believing you might have life in his name*, doth intend to take in Regeneration and Juſtification, as well as eternal life, which is the conſummation of all the Bleſſings of the Goſpel. I come now to the Obſervation, *viz.*

Volume XII.

That this Faith of the Gospel, which I have described, is truly and properly a Sanctifying, and Justifying, and Saving Faith.

I. I shall shew that it is properly a Sanctifying Faith.

II. A Justifying and Saving Faith.

I. It is truly Sanctifying. I know that this term of a Sanctifying Faith, is not much in use among Divines, and therefore it may seem a little more strange: but they might have used it if they had pleased, for it is every whit as proper to call Faith *sanctifying*, as *justifying* or *saving*. It is true indeed, this express term of *a sanctifying Faith* is no where in Scripture; no more are the very terms of *justifying* and *saving Faith*: but we are said *to be justified* and *saved by Faith* in Scripture, which is as much as if the terms had been used. And we are said also to be *sanctified by Faith*, as well as *justified* and *saved*, Acts 15. 9. Our *hearts* are said to be *purified by Faith*. And so likewise, our *victory over the world*, that

that is, our conquering and ſubduing of our covetous, and ambitious, and ſenſual luſts and deſires, are in a peculiar manner aſcribed to this *Faith* which I have deſcribed, 1 *John* 5. 4, 5. *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our Faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jeſus is the Son of God?*

II. That this Faith is truly and properly juſtifying and ſaving Faith. I put theſe, *Juſtification* and *Salvation*, together, partly becauſe they are of the ſame conſideration, as to the influence which Faith hath upon them; and the latter follows upon the former; for if we be *juſtified by Faith*, that is, have our ſins pardoned, by the ſame act of Faith we are *ſaved* from Hell, and conſequently made capable of eternal life; I ſay, by the very ſame act of Faith that we obtain the pardon of our ſins, we are ſaved from Hell, that is the puniſhment due to ſin; for pardon removes the guilt, and guilt is nothing elſe but an obligation to puniſhment: and partly, becauſe I find the Scripture uſeth them promiſcuouſly.

culouſly. When St. *James* diſputes about Juſtification by Faith, he uſes the term of being *ſaved by Faith*, Jam. 2. 14. *Can Faith ſave him?* Sometimes, of being *juſtified*, ver. 24. *So that a man is not juſtified by Faith only.*

In ſpeaking to this Propoſition, that the Faith of the Goſpel, which I have deſcribed, is properly Juſtifying and Saving Faith, I ſhall do theſe *ſix* things.

1. Shew that Juſtification in Scripture ſignifies no more than the Pardon and Remiſſion of ſins.

2. That Faith can in no propriety of Language be ſaid to be the inſtrument of our Pardon.

3. That the influence that the Faith of the Goſpel which I have deſcribed, hath upon the Pardon of ſin, is this, that it is the whole and entire condition required on our parts, upon the performance of which God hath promiſed to Pardon our ſins, and to ſave us.

4. That

Sermon VIII.

4. That the Scripture, where it treats of Juſtification by Faith, ſpeaks of this Faith which I have deſcribed, and no other.

5. That no metaphorical deſcriptions of juſtifying Faith are allowable, any farther than as they ſerve to illuſtrate and make clear the plain and ſimple notion of the thing. For if Metaphors once come to be inſiſted on, and ſtrained, and conſequences come to be drawn from them, and Doctrines founded, and Theories built upon them, they are of very ill conſequence, and ſerve to no other purpoſe but to blind and obſcure the plain and ſimple notions of things, and to ſeduce and miſ-lead the underſtandings of men, and to multiply controverſies without end. And I the rather take notice of this abuſe of Metaphors upon this ſubject, becauſe I do not know any other head of Divinity which hath ſuffered ſo much by them, as the Doctrine of Juſtifying Faith; whereby the plain truth hath been very much obſcur'd, and occaſion miniſter'd to many endleſs diſputes.

6. That if this plain and ſimple notion of Juſtifying Faith were admitted, it would ſuperſede all thoſe controverſies about Juſtification, which have ſo much troubled the Church. Theſe particulars I ſhall by Gods aſſiſtance ſpeak to, not out of a mind to oppoſe and contradict others; (what a pitiful deſign is that! and how much below one that is to ſpeak to men, in the name and fear of God!) but out of a hearty deſire to bring the truth to light, and to contribute ſomething to the clearing of that which is of ſo great importance and concernment to Chriſtian Religion,

1. That Juſtification of a ſinner in Scripture, ſignifies no more than the Pardon of ſin. That there are ſeveral acceptations of the word Juſtification in the new Teſtament, I deny not. Sometimes it ſignifies approbation in general of a thing, or perſon. So the word is uſed, *Luke* 7. 29. *And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, juſtified God, being baptized with the Baptiſm of John.* *Juſtified God,* How is that? that is, they approved and

and followed his Counſel, as appears evidently by the oppoſition in the next words; *But the Phariſees and Lawyers rejected the counſel of God againſt themſelves, being not baptized of him.* Thoſe that *rejected the counſel of God*, are oppoſed to thoſe that *juſtified God.* And ſo at the 35. *ver. But Wiſdom is juſtified of her children*, that is, is approved. And ſo very probably it may be underſtood in the Parable of the Phariſee and the Publican, *I tell you, this man went down to his houſe juſtified rather than the other*; that is, of the two, God did rather approve of his humble carriage, than the Phariſees proud and inſolent behaviour. Sometimes it ſignifies any Proof or Declaration of a thing. So *Rom.* 3. 4. *Let God be true, but every man a liar, as it is written, That thou mighteſt be juſtified in thy ſayings, and mighteſt overcome when thou art judged*, that is, that all thy words or promiſes might be proved and declared to be true, and that thou may'ſt prevail whenever thou art impleaded by men of unfaithfulneſs and unrighteouſneſs. And ſo 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. Chriſt is ſaid *to be juſtified in the ſpirit*; that is, by the Teſtimony of the Spirit concerning him;

Sermon VIII.

Volume XII.

him, as alſo by the Miracles which he wrought by the Holy Ghoſt, and the miraculous gifts of the Spirit which were pour'd forth on the Apoſtles, he was proved and declared to be the true *Meſſias*, and the Son of God. And this Phraſe of Ghriſt's *being juſtified by the Spirit*, ſeems to be of the ſame ſenſe with that expreſſion, *Rom.* 1. 4. *Declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the Spirit of holineſs, by the reſurrection from the dead*, that is, he was evidently proved to be the Son of God, by the great Miracle of his Reſurrection, which was wrought by the Power of the Holy Ghoſt. But moſt frequently, to Juſtifie, in Scripture, ſignifies to Pardon.

Thus the word Juſtifie, doth ſignifie variouſly, according to the ſubject or matter it is applied to: but when it is applied to a ſinner, it ſignifies nothing elſe but Pardon of his ſin. Nor can I poſſibly apprehend what other notion men can frame to themſelves, of a ſinners being Juſtified, diſtinct from Pardon and Remiſſion. Indeed if a perſon be not really guilty, that

is

is unjuſtly accuſed of a crime, he may be ſaid to be juſtified, when he is cleared from the charge and accuſation which is brought againſt him: but if a Man be guilty, he cannot otherwiſe be ſaid to be juſtified, than by having the guilt removed; that is, by being pardoned. And that the Scripture underſtands the ſame thing by Juſtification, and Pardon, or Remiſſion of ſins, is, I think, very evident from theſe two Texts. *Acts* 13. 38, 39. *That through this man is preached unto you the forgiveneſs of ſins*; that is, in and through *Jeſus Chriſt* the way of Pardon and Forgiveneſs is declared, *and by him, all that believe are juſtified from all things, from which ye could not be juſtified by the law of* Moſes; that is, and according to this declaration, all that do believe, are by him, that is, by the virtue of his Sacrifice, acquitted and cleared from the guilt of all thoſe ſins, for which there was no way of expiation provided by the Law of *Moſes*, that is, of preſumptuous ſins, for which there was no Sacrifice, but the Man was to be cut off. Now if the meaning of this Text be this, that

Volume XII.

that in and through *Chriſt* the way of Pardon and Forgiveneſs is declared, and accordingly all that do believe in him are pardon'd, then to be juſtified and pardoned, are all one in this place; but this is the meaning of the Text, if by the Phraſe of being *juſtified from all things, from which we could not be juſtified by the law of* Moſes, be meant the pardoning of ſuch Sins and Tranſgreſſions, for which, by the Law of *Moſes* there was no way of expiation: but this muſt of neceſſity be the meaning of this Phraſe; for what are *thoſe things*, from which it is ſaid, *we could not be juſtified by the Law of* Moſes, but ſinful tranſgreſſions and violations of the Law? And how can a Man be ſaid to be *juſtified from any ſin and tranſgreſſion*, otherwiſe than by the Pardon and Forgiveneſs of it? The other Text is *Rom.* 4. 6, 7, 8. *Even as* David *alſo deſcribeth the bleſſedneſs of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteouſneſs without works, ſaying, Bleſſed are they whoſe iniquities are forgiven, and whoſe ſins are covered; Bleſſed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute ſin.* The Man unto whom *God imputeth Righteouſneſs*, is the Man whom

whom *God juſtifies.* Now, how does *David* deſcribe the *bleſſedneſs* of the Man whom *God juſtifies?* Thus, *Bleſſed is the man whoſe iniquities are forgiven, and whoſe ſins are covered,* which is a Metaphorical expreſſion of the ſame thing, *covering of ſin* being the pardoning of it. From hence I reaſon, If according to the Apoſtle thoſe Propoſitions be equivalent, *Bleſſed is the man whoſe iniquities are forgiven,* and *Bleſſed is the man whom God Juſtifies,* then according to the Apoſtle, Juſtification and Forgiveneſs of ſins are all one: but thoſe Propoſitions are equivalent, if the Apoſtle cite the Text out of the *Pſalms* pertinently.

Sermon VIII.

2. That Faith can in no tolerable propriety of Language be ſaid to be the inſtrument of our Pardon, and conſequently not of our Juſtification. An inſtrument is ſomething ſubordinate to the principal efficient Cauſe, and made uſe of it, by it to produce the Effect; and this in natural and artificial Cauſes may be underſtood, but what notion to have of a moral inſtrument, I confeſs I am at a loſs. But to bring the buſineſs out of the

Volume XII.

clouds; We may thus conceive of the pardon of ſin. God in the Goſpel hath entered into a Covenant of Grace and Mercy with Sinners; one of the Benefits promiſed by God in the Covenant, is pardon of ſin. The Conditions upon which we ſhall be made partakers of the Benefit, are comprehended in this one word, *Faith*, which ſignifies the whole of Chriſtian Religion, *viz.* ſuch an effectual aſſent to the Revelation of the Goſpel, as doth produce Repentance, and ſincere Obedience, and a truſt and confidence in *Chriſt* alone for Salvation. The procuring or meritorious Cauſe of this Benefit, *viz.* the pardon of our ſins, is the death of Chriſt, which is called his Blood or Sacrifice. The principal efficient Cauſe of our pardon is God, in the Sentence of the Law, or which is all one, in the tenor of this Covenant, declaring us pardon'd upon theſe terms and conditions. Now how can Faith, which is an act on our parts, and the condition to be performed by us, be ſaid to be an Inſtrument in the hand of God of our Pardon; unleſs men will think fit to call a Con-

condition an Inſtrument, which I think no propriety of Language will allow. Sermon VIII.

I ſhould now proceed to the *third* particular which I propos'd, but ſhall refer that to my next Diſcourſe on this Argument.

SER-

SERMON IX.

Of Juſtifying Faith.

The Third Sermon on this Text.

JOHN XX. 31.

But theſe are written, that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

THE Obſervation I am diſcourſing upon is this, That to believe that *Jeſus* is the *Chriſt*, the Son of God, is truly and properly Sanctifying, and Juſtifying, and Saving Faith; I have enter'd upon the latter part of the Obſervation, *viz.* to ſhew that

this is truly and properly Juſtifying and Saving Faith, in ſpeaking to which, I propos'd to ſhew *ſix* things.

1. That Juſtification in Scripture ſignifies no more, but the Pardon and Remiſſion of ſins.

2. That Faith can in no propriety of Language, be ſaid to be the Inſtrument of our pardon. Thus far I have gone, and now proceed to what remains, *viz.* to ſhew,

3. That the influence which Faith hath upon the Pardon of ſin, is this, that it is the whole and entire condition, required in the Goſpel, of our pardon, upon the performance of which God hath promiſed to pardon ſin; which appears thus. All the conditions the Goſpel requires on our part in order to Pardon, may be reduced to theſe *four* heads.

(1.) An Aſſent to the Truth of the Goſpel.

(2.) A Truſt and Confidence in Chriſt as our only Saviour.

(3.) Re-

Sermon IX.

(3.) Repentance from dead works.

(4.) Sincere Obedience and Holineſs of Life. But I have already proved at large, that all theſe are comprehended in the New Teſtament notion of Faith, which ſignifies the whole of Chriſtian Religion. And that Repentance and Obedience are Conditions of our Pardon, and conſequently of our Juſtification, appears from theſe Texts, *Acts* 3. 19. *Repent therefore and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted out.* Doth not this imply that upon condition we do repent and be converted, God will Pardon our ſins? 1 *John* 1. 9. *If we confeſs our ſins,* (that is, with a Reſolution to leave them; as it is ſaid elſewhere, *he that confeſſeth, and forſaketh his ſins;) he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs.* Matt. 6. 14, 15. *For if ye forgive men their treſpaſſes, your heavenly father will alſo forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your father forgive your treſpaſſes.* And to the ſame purpoſe, *Matt.* 18. 35. *So*

likewiſe ſhall my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their treſpaſſes. Luke 6. 37. *Judge not, and ye ſhall not be judged: condemn not, and ye ſhall not be condemned: forgive, and ye ſhall be forgiven.* Luke 11. 4. *And forgive us our ſins; for we alſo forgive every one that is indebted to us.* Where doth the Scripture make any thing more plainly a Condition of Pardon, than it here does our forgiving of others? upon condition of the performance whereof he promiſes to forgive us; and without which he threatens not to forgive us. I know not what a Condition is, if it be not that which if we perform we ſhall receive the benefit promiſed; if we do not, we ſhall fall ſhort of it.

4. That the Scripture where it ſpeaks of Juſtification by Faith, ſpeaks of this Faith, and no other, of ſuch a Faith as takes in the whole of Chriſtian Religion. The principal places where the Scripture deſignedly treats of Juſtification by Faith, are the 3*d* and

3*d.* and 4*th.* Chapters of the Epiſtles to the *Romans*; the 2*d* and 3*d.* to the *Galatians*; and the 2*d.* of St. *James.* In the *Romans* and *Gallatians* St. *Paul* doth plainly oppoſe Faith to the Law, and the Righteouſneſs of it to the Works of the Law; and it will clearly appear to any one that will carefully read over theſe Diſcourſes of St. *Paul*'s, that by Faith is meant the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, and by the Law the Moſaical Adminiſtration: and the reſult of all thoſe Diſcourſes is, that men are not juſtified by performing the works which the legal Diſpenſation required; but by aſſenting and ſubmitting to the Revelation of the Goſpel. And this is agreeable to what he ſays, *Acts* 13. 38, 39. *Through this man is preached unto you forgiveneſs of ſins; and by him, all that believe, are juſtified from all things, from which ye could not be juſtified by the law of* Moſes. Sermon IX.

It is true likewiſe, that the Apoſtle, in the Epiſtle to the *Romans*, doth not only diſpute againſt thoſe who ſimply contended for Juſtification by the legal Diſpenſation; but were fallen alſo

Volume XII.

ſo into the groſs error and miſtake, that they did merit Juſtification and Pardon at God's hand; which is impoſſible: for Pardon is free, and of grace, or elſe it is not Pardon. Therefore the Apoſtle aſſerts, that we are ſo juſtified by Faith, that neither our Aſſent to the Goſpel, nor our Obedience to the Commands of it, do merit this at God's hands; for this would directly contradict Juſtification by the Faith of the Goſpel. For how can any Man poſſibly think, that he merits Pardon by his believing and obeying the Goſpel, when this is part of the Goſpel which we believe, that Chriſt died for our ſins, and purchaſed our Pardon at ſo dear a rate; which had been very unjuſt, if we our ſelves could have done any thing to have merited it.

And that Faith is taken for the Revelation of the Goſpel, in oppoſition to the legal Adminiſtrations, will appear by conſidering theſe Texts. *Gal.* 3. 23. *But before faith came, we were kept under the law*; by which the Apoſtle plainly means this, that before the Revelation of the Goſpel to the World

World, we were under the legal Administration: for he adds afterwards, *We were ſhut up unto the Faith that ſhould afterward be revealed*; and what is *the Faith that ſhould afterward be revealed*, but the Goſpel? which in the fulneſs of time was to be revealed to the World, till which time we were held under the diſpenſation of the Law: and *ver.* 24. *Wherefore the law was our Schoolmaſter to bring us unto Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by Faith*; that is, The Law was a Diſcipline preparatory for the Goſpel, that when that came, we might be juſtified by it: and *ver.* 25. *But after that Faith is come, we are no longer under a Schoolmaſter*, that is, After the Goſpel was revealed, we were ſet free from the ſevere and harſh Diſpenſation of the Law; and our Aſſent and Submiſſion to that Revelation, is that whereby we are ſaid to be juſtified. *Rom.* 3. 23. *Even the righteouſneſs of God, which is by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt*, that is, by the Goſpel, *unto all, and upon all them that believe.* And, ver. 26. *That he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him which believeth in Jeſus*; τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ, *the juſtifier of him* that

Sermon IX.

Volume XII.

yields Aſſent and Submiſſion to the Goſpel of Chriſt. And this Faith is ſaid to be *imputed to us for Righteouſneſs*, Chap. 4. 24. *But for us alſo, to whom it ſhall be imputed, if we believe on him that raiſed up Jeſus our Lord from the dead*; that is, If we aſſent and ſubmit to the Revelation of the Goſpel, which God hath confirmed by that eminent Miracle of raiſing up Chriſt from the dead.

St. *James* tells us moſt expreſly, that the Faith which juſtifies doth contain Obedience in it: and if it do not, it is dead, and falſe, and ineffectual to all purpoſes of Pardon and Salvation: and that if any Man pretend to Faith, and that Faith be deſtitute of the proper and genuine Effects of true Faith, it will be unprofitable to him, and not at all avail to his Juſtification and Salvation. The ſum of his Diſcourſe is, that the Faith which Juſtifies and ſaves us, muſt not only be a bare Aſſent of the underſtanding to the Truths of the Goſpel; but muſt include in it Obedience to all the Commands of the Goſpel: and if it does not, it does no more deſerve the name of

of Faith, than good words to a Man in want, deſerve the name of Charity. *Chap.* 2. *ver.* 14, 15, 16, 17. *What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man ſay he hath Faith, and hath not works? can Faith ſave him? If a Brother or Siſter be naked, and deſtitute of daily food, and one of you ſay unto them, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled: notwithſtanding ye give them not thoſe things which are needful to the body: what doth it profit? Even ſo Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.* And to this purpoſe he inſtanceth in *Abraham*, and *Rahab*, and ſhews that the Faith which juſtified them, did include in it the Effects of Faith, *viz.* Obedience, and good Works, *ver.* 21, 22. *Was not Abraham our Father juſtified by works, when he had offered Iſaac his ſon upon the Altar? Seeſt thou how Faith wrought with his works, and by works was Faith made perfect?* And, *ver.* 23. *And the Scripture was fulfilled, which ſaith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for Righteouſneſs.* But if *Abraham* were *juſtified by works*, viz. by offering up his Son upon the Altar, in Obedience to

Sermon IX.

Volume XII.

to God's Command, as he ſays before, at the 21. *verſe*, how was *the Scripture fulfilled, which ſaith, that Faith was imputed to him for Righteouſneſs*, that is, He was juſtified by Faith; unleſs Faith take in the works of Obedience? From whence he concludes, *that by works a man is juſtified, and not by Faith only*; not by naked Aſſent to the truth, but by ſuch a Faith as includes Obedience; which he farther illuſtrates by a ſimilitude at the laſt *verſe*; *As the Body without the Spirit is dead, ſo Faith without works is dead alſo.* A living Faith doth as truly contain Obedience in it, as a living body contains a Spirit.

And thoſe diſtinctions which are commonly applied to this Diſcourſe of St. *James* do not clear it, but contradict the expreſs deſign of it. Some ſay that *fides quæ eſt viva juſtificat; ſed non quâ viva. Faith which is living juſtifies; but not as a living Faith.* Others ſay, (which is much to the ſame purpoſe) *Fides juſtificat ſine operibus; ſed fides ſine operibus non juſtificat. Faith juſtifies without works; but Faith with-*

without works does not juſtifie. But St. *James* ſays expreſly, that *we are juſtified by works.* How then is that true, that *Faith juſtifies without works*? And he ſays that Works are the Life of our Faith. How then can any Man ſay, that *tho' Faith juſtifies*; *yet not as it is a living Faith*, when we are juſtified by that which is the very life of our Faith, and that is Obedience? Sermon IX.

There are *two* other diſtinctions whereby men endeavour to elude this plain Text, which I did not mention before; that *Faith juſtifies the Perſon*; *and Works juſtifie the Faith*, and that this is St. *James* his meaning. But what ground for this, when the Text ſpeaks expreſly of *the Perſon* being juſtified by works, as well as Faith? *Was not* Abraham *our Father juſtified by Works?* ver. 21. *You ſee then that by works a man is juſtified*; *and not by Faith only.* Ver. 24. *Likewiſe alſo was not* Rahab *the harlot juſtified by works?* What colour is here for any Man to ſay, that St. *James* does not ſpeak of the Juſtification of the *Perſon* by works; but of the *Faith*? Or what

what neceſſity of framing this diſtinction, but only to ſerve an opinion? But at this rate a Man may maintain any thing, tho' it be never ſo contrary to Scripture, and elude the cleareſt Text in the Bible.

The other diſtinction which is much to the ſame ſenſe, is that the Apoſtle doth not here ſpeak of a real Juſtification before God; but a declarative Juſtification before men. But according to this, what ſenſe can be made of *ver.* 14. *What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man ſay, I have faith; and have not works? Can Faith ſave him?* That is, according to this explication, can Faith without Works ſave him before men?

And this doth not contradict St. *Paul*, who ſaith *Gal.* 2. 16. that *A man is not juſtified by the works of the law: but by the Faith of Jeſus Chriſt.* For how does this, that we are juſtified not by the legal Diſpenſation, but by the Faith of the Goſpel, which includes Obedience and good works, contradict what St. *James* ſays, that we are not juſtified by a bare aſſent

to

to the Truth of the Goſpel, but by Obedience to the Commands of it? And I do not ſee that upon the contrary ſuppoſition, *viz.* that the Faith of the Goſpel doth not include Obedience in it, it is poſſible to reconcile theſe two Apoſtles. Suppoſe this was St. *Paul*'s meaning, that *we are juſtified by Faith*, as the only Condition and Inſtrument, call it what they will, of our juſtification; but not by Obedience or good Works, as a condition of our Juſtification; by what kind of Comment can St. *James* his words be brought to this ſenſe? What Man would allow that thoſe words at the 21. *ver. Was not Abraham our Father juſtified by works, when he offer'd Iſaac his ſon upon the altar*, ſhould be explained by this ſenſe? Was not *Abraham*, when in Obedience to God's Command he had offer'd his Son upon the Altar, and upon this Act of Obedience was juſtified, was not he juſtified by Faith only, and not by any work or act of Obedience? Or that thoſe words at the 24. verſe, *Ye ſee then that by works a man is juſtified; and not by Faith only*, ſhould be interpret-

Sermon IX.

ed

Volume XII.

ed, Ye see then that by Faith only a Man is justified, and not by Works? And unless they be thus interpreted, they are not to be reconciled with the sense of St. *Paul*'s words, which many fasten upon them: but if St. *Paul*'s words be taken in the most plain and obvious sense they are capable of, *viz.* that *we are not justified by the works of the law*, that is, by performing the works required by the legal Dispensation; *but by the faith of Jesus Christ*, that is, by assenting and submitting to the Revelation of the Gospel; we do not strain St. *James* his words, to reconcile him with St. *Paul*.

And thus I have shewn, that where the Scripture speaks of Justification by Faith, it speaks of this Faith which I have described. I add, and of no other; not of a bare appropriation of the Grace and Mercy of the Gospel; that is, in plain *English*, this is not justifying Faith, to believe that I am pardoned, and justified, nor to have a firm assurance of this. For if we be justified by Faith, we must believe before we can be justified; but if this be justifying Faith to believe,

or

or be assured we are justified, we must be justified before we believe; or else when we believe that we are justified, we must believe that which is not true. Nor is this justifying Faith, to lay hold of the Righteousness and Merits of Christ for the Pardon of our sins; that is, to trust and confide only in that, as the meritorious Cause of our Pardon. For tho' this be part of the notion of justifying Faith, it is not all; tho' this be one of the Terms or Conditions upon which we are justified; yet it is not the whole and intire condition; which besides this takes in an assent to the whole Gospel, Repentance from dead works, and Obedience to all the Precepts of the Gospel. And if any Man can produce any one Text which saith, that the Faith which justifies, consists only in the trust and confidence in the Merits of Christ, for the Pardon of sin, or any thing to this effect, I will be most ready publickly to acknowledge my error: but if no body can do this, I shall beg their Pardon if I do continue still of the same mind I was.

Volume XII.

I have now done with the *fourth* thing I propounded: but before I ſpeak to the *two* heads which remain, I muſt remove an Objection or two, that my former Diſcourſe may ſeem liable to.

Objection *firſt*, To make Obedience a Condition of Pardon, ſeems to take away the freeneſs of God's Grace in pardoning ſinners.

1. God's Grace in pardoning a ſinner is ſaid to be free, not becauſe it is not ſuſpended upon any Condition; for the Scripture tells us plainly, that it is upon the condition of Faith, and Repentance, and forgiving others, and the like: but it is free, becauſe God was pleaſed freely to give his Son to die for our ſins, and to accept of his Sacrifice for the expiation of them, and to impoſe eaſie and reaſonable Conditions upon us, in order to our enjoying of this benefit; and upon ſuch Conditions, tho' they have nothing of Virtue, or Merit, of any Natural or Moral Efficacy to deſerve,

deſerve, or procure ſuch a Benefit as the Pardon of our ſins, for the ſake of his Son, whom he gave to be a ranſom for us, to receive us to Grace and Mercy; and I think this bundantly enough to make our juſtification very gracious and free, tho' not abſolutely free from all condition. Sermon IX.

2. Our Salvation is ſaid in Scripture to be as free as our Juſtification; we are ſaid *to be ſaved by Grace*, as well as *juſtified freely by his Grace.* But will any Man ſay, that we are ſaved without any Conditions, who reads theſe Texts? *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life: but he that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life. Bleſſed are the pure in heart: for they ſhall ſee God. Except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh. If ye walk after the fleſh, ye ſhall die: but if thro' the ſpirit, ye mortifie the deeds of the fleſh, ye ſhall live. Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord.* So that he who can underſtand how we may be ſaved by Grace, tho' our Salvation be ſuſpended upon the Condition of Faith, Repentance, and Holineſs, and Obedience of life, may, if he pleaſe, underſtand

Volume XII.

derſtand how we may be juſtified freely by God's Grace, tho' it be upon the ſame Conditions. So that if men were not monſtrouſly perverſe, it is impoſſible they ſhould not ſee the weakneſs of this Objection.

Objection the *ſecond.* This is the Doctrine of the Papiſts, that Obedience and good Works are a Condition of our juſtification.

Anſw. 1. I am for the Doctrine which is evidently contained in Scripture, whoever hold it. A Man ought not to be frighted out of the truth by any name.

2. But there is a wide difference between the Doctrine of the Papiſts about juſtification, and this Doctrine. They ſay that Obedience and good Works are not only a Condition of our juſtification, but a meritorious Cauſe of it; which I abhor as much as any one. It is the Doctrine of *merit* that the Proteſtants chiefly oppoſe in the matter of juſtification; and if ſome alſo oppoſe the Papiſts about good Works being a Condition, I know no body

body that thinks himſelf obliged to hold every opinion that any Proteſtant hath maintained againſt the Papiſts: and the like I ſay to the Objection of *Socinianiſm*, and *Arminianiſm*, and a hundred names more, if people think fit to faſten them upon it. Sermon IX.

And now I might compare this Doctrine with the contrary. All that may be ſaid againſt it is, that it diminiſheth the Grace of God: but that I have ſhewn it doth not; but then it hath theſe advantages. It is ſo far as I can judge, (and mine own judgment muſt govern me) much more plainly contained in Scripture, and it is a Doctrine more *according to godlineſs*, it tends more to quicken men to Obedience and a holy life, to believe that they cannot have their ſins otherwiſe pardon'd, than to believe that they may have their ſins pardon'd without Obedience and a holy life; and if Obedience be not a neceſſary condition of Pardon, it is plain that men may be pardon'd without it. For Example, if a Man promiſe me a thouſand Pounds, only upon this condition, that I will believe him and truſt him, but

Volume XII.

without any Condition of doing what he ſhall command me, and he ſhall declare thus much to me; If I can truſt this Man's word, I need not doubt but I ſhall have the ſum promiſed, tho' I ſhould diſobey him in every thing that he commanded me to do: and this is juſt the caſe; and if it be, it is no wonder that men are ſo loth to disbelieve this pleaſant opinion, which gives men comfortable hopes of the Pardon of their ſins upon ſuch eaſie terms. Not that I am ſo uncharitable, as not to acknowledge that our Worthy and Excellent Divines, who have been of this Judgment, have always preſs'd the neceſſity of Holineſs and Obedience: but I am ſorry they could not do it with ſo good advantage, according to their Principles, the natural conſequence of them tending to licentiouſneſs, and a neglect of the Precepts of the Goſpel, to which purpoſe they have been ſadly abuſed by ſeveral Libertines in theſe and former times, ever ſince *Luther*'s days, and I could never yet ſee how *Antinomianiſm* could ſolidly be confuted upon thoſe Principles.

5. That

Sermon IX.

5. That no Metaphorical descriptions of justifying Faith are allowable any farther, than as they serve to illustrate the plain, and proper, and simple notion of Faith. My meaning is, he that would teach men what Faith is, he must first acquaint men with the thing, and describe it in as proper and simple words as can be, and not by Figurative and Metaphorical Phrases. Indeed after a Man hath delivered the simple notion of a thing in proper words, he may afterward illustrate it by Metaphors: but then these are not to be insisted upon, and strained to the utmost extent of the Metaphor, beyond what the true notion of the thing will bear: for if consequences once come to be drawn from Metaphors, and Doctrines founded, and Theories built upon them, instead of illustrating the thing, they blind and obscure it, and serve to no other purpose, but to seduce and mislead the understandings of men, and to multiply Controversies without end: and (as I told you before) I do the rather take notice of this abuse of Metaphors upon this subject, because

I do not know any other head of Divinity which hath ſuffered ſo much by them, as the Doctrine of juſtifying Faith, whereby the plain Truth hath been very much darkned, and occaſion miniſtred to many endleſs diſputes. But this will beſt appear by ſome particular inſtances. Juſtifying Faith hath uſually been deſcribed by theſe Metaphors, *reſting*, and *relying*, and *leaning* upon Chriſt, *apprehending* and *laying hold*, and *applying* of Chriſt, *receiving* of Chriſt, and *coming to him*. Now concerning theſe, I ſhall briefly ſpeak theſe *three* or *four* things.

(1.) That none of theſe Metaphors, except the two laſt, *receiving of Chriſt*, and *coming to him*, are any where uſed in Scripture, to deſcribe juſtifying Faith by; and therefore there is no reaſon why they ſhould be ſo much uſed and inſiſted on. Let any Man ſhew me where juſtifying Faith is any where in Scripture deſcribed by *reſting*, and *relying*, and *leaning* upon Chriſt, by *apprehending* and *laying hold*, and *applying* of him.

(2.) If

Sermon IX.

(2.) If these Metaphors were explained and turned into proper and plain words, they can signifie nothing else, but that Faith which I have been all this while describing. For what can any Man understand by *resting*, and *relying*, and *leaning* upon Christ, but to trust in him as the Author of our eternal Salvation, under which word all the Benefits which Christ hath purchased for us are comprehended? Now can any Man be said to trust in Christ, as the Author of his Salvation, otherwise than by assenting to the truth of the Gospel, and complying with the terms and conditions of it? And what can any Man understand by *apprehending*, and *laying hold* on, and *applying* Christ, other than this, to make use of him for all those ends and purposes for which God hath appointed him? And what those are the Scripture tells us; that *he is made unto us of God, Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption.*

(3.) As for those Scripture Metaphors of *receiving* Christ, and *coming*

Volume XII.

to him, the Scripture uſeth them but ſparingly, and I dare ſay, for once that it uſeth theſe Metaphors, it doth twenty times deſcribe Faith by plain and proper words; and where it does make uſe of theſe Metaphors, it doth ſufficiently explain them. So you find *coming* to Chriſt, is explained by *learning* of him, *Matth.* 11. 28, 29. *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye ſhall find reſt unto your ſouls.* That is, come to me as Scholars and Diſciples to be taught by me; in order to which, it is requiſite that we ſhould believe him. *Oportet diſcentem credere, he that will learn, muſt believe him that teacheth him,* and truſt his skill. And ſo for *receiving* him, leſt the Metaphor ſhould ſeduce men, St. *John* had no ſooner uſed it, but he tells what he means by it, *John* 1. 12. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name*; that is,

is, believed him to be the perſon promiſed to be the *Meſſias*, and Saviour of the World; as appears by the oppoſition in the Verſe before, *He came to his own, and his own received him not*; that is, rejected him, did not own him to be the true *Meſſias*. But now if we will ſtrain ſuch a Metaphor as this, beyond the intention of it, and becauſe *believing* is call'd a *receiving* of Chriſt, and we receive things with the hand, and the hand is an Inſtrument, will from hence infer, that Faith is an Inſtrument of our juſtification; what may not men make of the Scripture at this rate? Sermon IX.

(4.) I will add this concerning Scripture Metaphors in general, that where the Scripture uſeth Metaphors which were very familiar in thoſe Languages in which the Scripture was writ, and well underſtood by thoſe who ſpoke that Language, but are very obſcure and uncouth to us, and not at all uſed in our Language, as moſt of the Scripture Metaphors are, the proper work of a Miniſter is not to inſiſt in ſuch caſes upon Scripture Metaphors, to darken his Diſcourſe by them, but

Volume XII.

but to explain them, and make them intelligible, to tranſlate them into *Engliſh*, and inſtead of them to uſe ſuch Phraſes as people are more familiarly acquainted with, and are uſed in our own Language. For a Man may be *a Barbarian* that ſpeaks to People in *unknown Phraſes* and Metaphors, as well as *he that ſpeaks in an unknown tongue*; and the very ſame reaſon that obligeth us to put the Scripture into a known Language, doth oblige men to explain the Doctrines contain'd in it by ſuch Phraſes and Metaphors as are known and uſed in that Language.

6. That if this plain and ſimple notion of juſtifying Faith were admitted, it would ſuperſede all thoſe Controverſies about juſtification, which have ſo much troubled the reformed Churches. Thoſe who have been curious to enquire into theſe matters, have reckon'd up at leaſt twenty ſeveral opinions among the Proteſtants concerning juſtifying Faith. I do not deſire to acquaint my ſelf with thoſe differences; he that would know what juſtification, and juſtifying Faith are, ſhall ſooner come to underſtand the Nature

Nature of them, by diligent reading of the Scriptures, than by reading over all the controverſial Writings of Divines about them; and if men would but content themſelves with thoſe plain and ſimple Deſcriptions, which the Scripture gives us of Faith, there could not be any great difference about it; this would cut off moſt of thoſe diſputes which have been commenced upon Metaphors, and figurative ſpeeches. And here I had thought to have deſcended to a particular conſideration of the Controverſies about juſtifying Faith, but I am weary of the work; and therefore ſhall only make ſome brief Reflections upon this whole Diſcourſe, and then apply it to our own Uſe. But this, God willing, the next opportunity.

SER-

SERMON X.

The Condition of the Goſpel Covenant, and the Merit of Chriſt, conſiſtent.

The Fourth Sermon on this Text.

JOHN XX. 31.

But theſe are written, that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his Name.

I Have in my former Diſcourſes on theſe words treated largely of the Nature of Chriſtian Faith, particularly as it Sanctifies, Juſtifies, and Saves men. All that I farther propoſe is,

Volume XII.

is, to make some reflections upon this whole Discourse, particularly that which relates to justifying Faith, and then to apply all to our own Use.

I have already taken notice of *two* Objections, to which my Discourse may seem liable, and if yet there remain any prejudice upon any Man's Spirit against this Doctrine, I would desire such calmly to consider it, and the agreeableness of it not to the opinions of men, but to the Word of God, and the suitableness of it to the great design of Christian Religion, every where exprest in the Gospel, which is to bring men to Holiness and Obedience. And what Argument and consideration can be more powerful to take men off from sin, and to excite them to the practice of Holiness, than this, that Repentance and Obedience are an indispensable Condition of our Justification and Pardon? And this is the very point in difference, whether the Gospel do not make Repentance and Obedience conditions of our Pardon and Justification, as well as an assent to the truth of the Gospel, and a trust in Christ

as

as the meritorious cauſe of our Salvation. That they are, I have endeavoured to prove from Scripture; and for the farther clearing of it, I deſire that the Nature of the Goſpel-Covenant may be well conſider'd, which I take to be this. On God's part there are certain Benefits promiſed, Juſtification, and Pardon of ſin, and eternal Life and Salvation. On our part there are certain Conditions required before we can be made partakers of thoſe Benefits; theſe are, to aſſent to the truth of the Goſpel, truſting in Chriſt as our only Saviour, Repentance from dead works, and a ſincere purpoſe and reſolution of Obedience, and a holy life; theſe make up the whole and entire Condition of the Goſpel, and are often expreſt by this one word, *Faith*, which ſignifies the whole duty of a Chriſtian; becauſe he that truly believes the Goſpel, will do whatever the Goſpel requires. And hence it is, that to be a Chriſtian, and to be a Believer, are in the Phraſe of the New Teſtament all one. Now the matter in controverſie is plainly this; whether this whole Condition be required of us in order to our Pardon

Sermon X.

Volume XII.

don and Juſtification, as well as in order to our Salvation. That Repentance, and Obedience, and Holineſs of life, are Conditions of our Salvation, I think is univerſally agreed; I am ſure it is clearly expreſt in theſe two Texts, *Chriſt is the author of eternal Salvation to them that obey him*, Heb. 5. 9. *Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord*, *Heb.* 12. 14. And that the Condition of our Juſtification and Salvation are the ſame, I think is every whit as clear both from Scripture, and from the general acknowledgment of Divines by neceſſary conſequence. From Scripture, St. *James* ſays, that the ſame thing that juſtifies us, ſaves us: for when he diſputes, whether we are juſtified by Faith only, or by Faith and Works, he hath this expreſſion, *What doth it profit, my brethren, tho' a man ſay he hath Faith, and have not works, can faith ſave him?* From whence the inference is plain, that upon the very ſame condition that we are juſtified, we are ſaved. And 'tis evident by neceſſary conſequence from the general acknowledgment of Divines; for I think this is univerſally agreed by Divines, that

that whatever puts a Man into a ſtate of Juſtification and Pardon: puts a Man into a ſtate of Salvation; and if this be true, it neceſſarily follows, that the Conditions of our Juſtification and Salvation are the ſame: and if aſſent to the Truth of the Goſpel, and truſt in Chriſt as our only Saviour, be the only Conditions of our Juſtification, then they are the only Conditions of our Salvation; and Repentance and Obedience are not Conditions of our Salvation: but if they be Conditions of our Salvation, then they are of our Juſtification. And I will be bold to ſay, that this hath as much of demonſtration in it, as any thing in Divinity is capable of; and I wonder extremely how any Man, that conſiders the Nature of the Goſpel-Covenant, can imagine that we ſhould be made partakers of any Bleſſing or Benefit promiſed in the Covenant, without performing the whole Condition of the Covenant.

Sermon X.

And now if any Man ask, *Cui bono?* To what end is all this? Suppoſe it be true, to what purpoſe is it to awaken differences, and ſtir up controverſies

Volume XII.

about theſe matters? In order to theſe *two* Ends, which I take to be very conſiderable.

1. That we may be able to anſwer the Papiſts, who charge us with *Solifidianiſm*; as if we were of this opinion, That if a Man do but truſt in Chriſt, that is, be but confidently perſwaded that he will ſave him, and pardon him, this is ſufficient; and conſequently, he that is thus perſwaded, need not take any farther care of his Salvation, but may live as he liſt. And I do not ſee how this can be avoided; eſpecially if this be true, which our Divines univerſally aſſert, That whatever puts a Man into a juſtified ſtate, puts him into a ſtate of Salvation; I ſay, I do not ſee how this Charge can be avoided, unleſs we own Holineſs and Obedience to be Conditions of our Juſtification, as well as Truſt in Chriſt. I know no other middle way between *Popery* and *Antinomianiſm*. But,

2. Which is more conſiderable, Without this we can give no ſatisfactory and reaſonable account of our Religion

ligion to a Heathen. Suppose a Heathen should say thus, Your Religion gives a very good account of the corruption and sinfulness of Mankind, and hath provided a very probable Remedy for the expiation of it, by the death of the Son of God: but this seems to me very unreasonable, and to contradict the most natural notions that we have of God's Justice and Holiness, that he should pardon men, as you say he does, tho' they do not repent of their sins, nor are resolved to leave them, nay, tho' they be resolved to go on in a wicked course. Did ever any wise Prince pardon a Traitor upon these terms? But whoever says that repentance, and a sincere purpose and Resolution of Obedience, are not the Condition of our pardon, says that God will pardon men without Repentance, tho' they are not at all sorry for what they have done, nor resolved to change their course: for that is a Condition without which a thing cannot be; and if Repentance be not a Condition of pardon, a Man may be pardoned without it. And if this be true, Christianity is the most lewd and

Sermon X.

Volume XII.

ſenſeleſs Doctrine in the World. For what can be a greater encouragement to ſin than this, to tell men that they may be pardoned without Repentance? That is, tho' they live in ſin, and continue ſo to do. *Paganiſm* never taught any ſuch thing. Nay, they may add farther, That this which you teach as the Doctrine of your Religion, ſeems expreſly contrary to your own Books, which you ſay contain your Religion. Does not the Bible ſay, that *he that confeſſeth and forſaketh his ſin, ſhall find mercy*? And doth not this plainly imply, that Repentance is a Condition of pardon? *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* Doth it not ſay, that *if you forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you*? Can any words more plainly expreſs a condition than theſe do? How ſhould we be able to defend our Religion againſt ſuch an aſſault, unleſs we diſclaim this Charge, and tell them plainly, and without a diſtinction, That

our Religion teacheth that Repentance and Reſolution of Holineſs and Obedience are Conditions of our Pardon and Juſtification? I would to God men would conſult the honour of Chriſtianity, and when they hold any opinion, they would conſider not the intereſt of a Party, but the univerſal Concernment of Chriſtian Religion. If we had to deal with ſubtile Heathens, as the primitive Fathers of the Church had, we ſhould ſee a neceſſity of laying aſide ſuch unreaſonable opinions. I would fain have any Man ſhew any one clear paſſage out of any of the ancient Fathers and Writers concerning Chriſtian Religion, which ſays, That Truſt in Chriſt for Salvation is the only Condition of our Juſtification, and that Repentance and Obedience are not; or that explains Juſtification by Faith alone, in this ſenſe. I know it is uſually ſaid, the ancient Fathers and Chriſtians were ignorant of the Doctrine of Juſtification in a great meaſure, and knew very little of the Myſtery of the Goſpel. I know not what they mean by *Myſtery*: but I am ſure they defined Chriſtian Religion better, and gave a Sermon X.

Volume XII. more reasonable and satisfactory account of it, than any of those do, who are so apt to slight them.

The *Use* of this Doctrine is as follows.

First, To perswade men to place all their hope and confidence of Salvation in *Jesus Christ* the Son of God; that is, to believe that through the alone merit of his Death and Sufferings God is reconciled to us, and that only upon the account of the Satisfaction which he hath made to Divine Justice, we are restored to the favour of God, and our sins are pardon'd to us, and we have a title to eternal life. Not but that there are Conditions required on our part, to make us capable of these Benefits, Faith and Repentance and sincere Obedience and Holiness of life, without which we shall never be made partakers of them: but that the Satisfaction of Christ is the only meritorious Cause of these blessings. And to perswade men to the belief of this, I shall endeavour to satisfie them of these *two* things.

I. That

Sermon X.

I. That Chriſt hath properly merited theſe Bleſſings for us,

II. That he only hath done it. The *firſt* of theſe Propoſitions is directly levell'd againſt the *Socinians*: the *ſecond* againſt the *Papiſts*. I ſhall ſpeak but briefly of them.

I. That Chriſt hath properly merited theſe Bleſſings for us. And this being purely matter of Revelation, we are to rely upon Scripture only for the proof of it. *Matt.* 20. 28. *The Son of man came not to be miniſter'd unto, but to miniſter, and to give his life a ranſom for many,* λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν, *a price of Redemption,* inſtead of that which ſhould have been paid by us. *John* 6. 51. *And the bread which I will give is my fleſh, which I will give for the life of the world.* John 10. 11. Chriſt is call'd *the good Shepherd that lays down his life for his Sheep.* John 15. 12, 13. *This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.* Matth. 26. 28. *For this*

Volume XII.

is my blood of the new teſtament, which is ſhed for many, for the remiſſion of ſins. Rom. 5. 6. *For when we were yet without ſtrength, in due time Chriſt died for the ungodly.* 1. Cor. 15. 3. *For I delivered unto you firſt of all, that which I alſo received, how that Chriſt died for our ſins according to the Scriptures.* 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15. *For the love of Chriſt conſtraineth us, becauſe we thus judge; that if one dyed for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live, ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him which died for them, and roſe again.* Eph. 1. 7. *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the riches of his grace.* Col. 1. 20, 21, 22. *And (having made peace through the blood of his croſs) by him to reconcile all things unto himſelf, by him, I ſay, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you that were ſometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his fleſh through death, to preſent you holy and unblameable and unreprovable in his ſight.*

ſight. 1 Theſſ. 5. 9, 10. *For God hath not appointed us to wrath: but to obtain ſalvation by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who died for us.* Heb. 2.9. *That he by the grace of God ſhould taſte death for every man.* Heb. 9. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. *But Chriſt being come an high prieſt of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to ſay, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entred in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the aſhes of an heifer, ſprinkling the unclean, ſanctifyeth to the purifying of the fleſh; how much more ſhall the blood of Chriſt, who through the eternal Spirit offered himſelf without ſpot to God, purge your conſcience from dead works, to ſerve the living God? And for this cauſe he is the Mediatour of the New Teſtament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the tranſgreſſions that were under the firſt Teſtament, they which are called might receive the promiſe of eternal inheritance.* And ver. 25, 26, 27, 28. *Nor yet that he ſhould offer himſelf often*

Sermon X.

ten

Volume XII.

ten, as the high prieſt entreth into the holy place every year with blood of others: (For then muſt he often have ſuffered ſince the foundation of the world:) but now once in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: ſo Chriſt was once offered to bear the ſins of many; and unto them that look for him, ſhall he appear the ſecond time, without ſin, unto ſalvation. Heb. 10. 11, 12. *And every prieſt ſtandeth daily miniſtring and offering oftentimes the ſame ſacrifices, which can never take away ſins: but this man, after he had offered one ſacrifice for ſins, for ever ſate down on the right hand of God.* 1 Pet. 1, 18, 19. *Foraſmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as ſilver and gold, from your vain converſation received by tradition from your fathers: but with the precious blood of Chriſt, as of a lamb without blemiſh and without ſpot.* 1 Pet. 2, 21, 24. *Becauſe Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us; who his own ſelf bare our ſins in his own body, on the tree.* 1 Pet. 3. 18. *For Chriſt alſo hath once ſuffered for ſins, the juſt for*

for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God. 1 John 2. 1, 2. *My little children, theſe things write I unto you, that ye ſin not. And if any man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our ſins: and not for ours only, but alſo for the ſins of the whole world.* 1 John 3. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, becauſe he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.* 1 John 4. 10. *Herein is love, not that we loved God; but that he loved us, and ſent his Son to be the propitiation for our ſins.* Rev. 1. 5. *Unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood.* Rev. 5. 9. *Thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.* From theſe and many other Texts, it ſeems to be very plain and evident, that Chriſt died for our ſins, and ſuffered in our ſtead, and by the Sacrifice of himſelf hath made an atonement for us, and reconciled us to God, and hath paid a price and ranſom for us; and by the merit of his death hath purchaſed for us forgiveneſs of ſins, and *inheritance among* Sermon X.

among them that are ſanctified. And I do not know any Doctrine of our Religion, that is founded and eſtabliſh'd upon more and plainer Texts, which cannot be underſtood in any other ſenſe, without offering great violence to the firſt and moſt obvious meaning of them.

Volume XII.

I know the *Socinians* have framed evaſions to all theſe Texts, which I have not time now to produce and examine; nor would it be worth the while. I ſhall only ſay this to them in general; that there is no Principle of Religion ſo plainly laid down in the whole Scripture, but may be overthrown by the ſame, or the like evaſions. Suppoſe Chriſt had died in our ſtead, and made ſatisfaction for ſin, and God had intended to declare ſo much to us; in what plainer and more expreſs and proper words could he have done it, than the Scripture hath already done? If God had ſaid in the Scripture expreſly, that *Chriſt* had *died in our place and ſtead*, and had *ſatisfied for our ſins*; theſe very expreſſions, by the ſame arts of interpretation, might have been ſtrained and wreſted

wreſted to ſome other ſenſe: So that if God did not intend to expreſs to us by theſe Texts, that *Chriſt ſatisfied for the ſins of men*, yet they are ſo obvious to be interpreted to that ſenſe, and ſo hardly, if at all, capable of any other, that we cannot imagine, without a great reflection upon the Wiſdom of God, that he ſhould deliver his mind to men in words and expreſſions ſo exceedingly liable to a quite different ſenſe from what he intended. Beſides that there is nothing more unreaſonable, than to deny that to be the meaning of Scripture, which if it had been the meaning, could not have been expreſt in plainer and more advantageous words; eſpecially when this is done, not in one or two Texts, but very many; and not by one form of expreſſion, but ſeveral, and all inclining to the ſame ſenſe; and which is worſt of all, this violence is offer'd to Scripture in a matter which does neither contradict other Texts, nor the Reaſon of Mankind, *viz.* That one Man ſhould ſuffer in another's ſtead, and make ſatisfaction for the crimes and faults which another hath commited; ſuppoſing the party offended

Sermon X.

Volume XII.

be willing to accept of the Commutation, and the Party that ſuffers in anothers ſtead do voluntarily do it.

II. That Chriſt only hath merited theſe Bleſſings for us, and that he had no partner with him in this; or there is no other hath merited theſe Bleſſings for us, nor can we our ſelves merit them.

1. No other hath merited theſe Bleſſings for us. Not to take notice of what the *Papiſts* ſay of the meritorioufneſs of our works of *Supererrogation*, which go into the Treaſury of the Church, and make up a publick Stock of Merit, to be diſpoſed and dealt out by the Pope at his Diſcretion; they have by a moſt unparallell'd Blaſphemy joyned the Virgin *Mary* with Chriſt in the work of our Redemption, and ſome of them been ſo impiouſly bold, as to parallel the Virtue of her Milk with the efficacy of Chriſt's Blood. And tho' Chriſt ſay, that *he trode the winepreſs of his father's wrath alone, and of the people there was none with him*; yet *Bonaventure* in his Meditations ventures to

to corrupt the Text, by this fooliſh gloſs, *Nullus erat tecum. Rectè domine, ſed erat tecum femina*; *right, Lord, there was no man with thee, but there was a woman*, viz. *thy mother*. Sermon X.

2. Nor can we our ſelves do any thing whereby we can merit theſe Bleſſings at God's hands. Conſidering that we received our Being, and all that we are and have from God, and upon account of theſe Benefits are obliged to love him and ſerve him to the utmoſt; what a ſenſeleſs piece of arrogance is it to ſay, that a Creature can merit any thing at God's hand? Whatever we give God is of his own, and when we have done all we can, we have done no more than our duty. And can any Man challenge any reward for doing what he ought to do? Can any Man make ſatisfaction for a fault that he hath committed, by doing his duty? that is, by not committing another? It is a ſure Rule, *Debitum debito non ſolvitur*. We are indebted to God by the breach of his Law: but we can't quit this debt, and ſatisfie for this breach, by not breaking

Volume XII.

breaking it again, becauſe we owe to God all poſſible Obedience.

Beſides that all our Obedience is imperfect, and is ſo far from meriting, that it ſtands in need of Pardon; and can a Man demerit, and merit by the ſame action? Can he who deſerves to be puniſh'd for an action, becauſe he did it no better, deſerve to be rewarded for the ſame action, becauſe he did it ſo well? And to ſay that Chriſt hath merited that our imperfect Obedience ſhould merit, either ſignifies only this, that Chriſt hath merited that our imperfect Obedience ſhould be accepted by God, notwithſtanding its imperfection; (and this is true, but nothing to the purpoſe of merit;) or elſe it ſignifies, that Chriſt hath merited that *that* which is no wiſe meritorious, ſhould be ſo; that is, that the Nature of things ſhould be alter'd; which is not only falſe, but ſenſeleſs.

Secondly, To perſwade us to live as we believe. If we profeſs to believe the Goſpel to be true, then let our hearts and lives be ſuitable to thoſe Truths

truths which we believe. If we believe *Jeſus to be the Chriſt, the Son of God*, we believe the Doctrine which he deliver'd to the World to be from God, and conſequently to be true; we believe the Precepts of it are Holy, and Juſt, and Good, and that they are neceſſary to be obſerved by us, as being in order to our Peace and Happineſs; we believe that the Promiſes of the Goſpel are *all yea, and amen*, and ſhall every tittle of them be made good; we believe that the threatnings of the Goſpel ſhall all punctually be fulfilled. Now how ought men to live that believe all this? Having a Law given us which hath the ſanction of ſuch Promiſes and Threatnings, ought we not to conform our lives to it; and charge our ſelves with Obedience to all thoſe Precepts of Piety toward God, and Purity and Temperance in the government of our ſelves, and Juſtice and Righteouſneſs in our dealing with others, which are contained in this new Law of the Goſpel? If the Goſpel have promiſed eternal life and happineſs to thoſe who do conſcientiouſly abſtain from ſin, and follow Holineſs; *having*

Sermon X.

theſe promiſes, ought we not *to cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs both of fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God?* If the Goſpel hath threatned, that at the end of the World, Chriſt will *come in flaming fire*, &c. If we believe theſe things ſhall be, *what manner of perſons ought we to be in all holy converſation and godlineſs?*

I have formerly ſhewed at large, how unbecoming it is for any Man, that profeſſeth himſelf a Chriſtian, to live unſuitably to his profeſſion; that it is the greateſt diſparagement to the Goſpel, and the higheſt reflection upon it that can be; and that it is infinitely dangerous to us: and tho' theſe be very proper Conſiderations, yet becauſe I have formerly urged them, I ſhall not now enforce my Exhortation with theſe Arguments; but ſhall mention *two* other Conſiderations, and ſo conclude.

Firſt, If our lives be not anſwerable to our belief, our Faith will be ineffectual to all intents and purpoſes.

Secondly,

Secondly, A life unſuitable to our belief is the high way to Infidelity and Atheiſm.

Firſt, If our lives be not anſwerable to our belief, our Faith will be ineffectual to all real intents and purpoſes.

1. It will be ineffectual to give us the Reputation of Chriſtians among wiſe and diſcerning Perſons. We profeſs to believe the Goſpel: but if we live contrary to it, our profeſſion is *proteſtatio contra factum*, and therefore not credible; becauſe our actions contradict it. The conſtant tenor of a Man's actions is a more credible and emphatical declaration of the inward ſenſe of his heart, and ſhews better what the Man believes, than the moſt ſolemn profeſſion in words. When our words are not confirmed by our actions, they are but an empty ſound, and ſignifie nothing. I may allude to that of St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 13. 2. *Tho' a man have all faith*, yet if he be deſtitute of the true Effect of Faith, *Charity*, *he is but as a ſounding braſs, and a*

Volume XII.

tinckling cymbal. St. *James* doth very well ſet forth the inefficacy of ſuch a Faith, by this ſimilitude, *James* 2. 15, 16, 17. *If a brother or ſiſter be naked, and deſtitute of daily food, and one of you ſay unto them, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled; notwithſtanding ye give them not thoſe things whech are needful to the body: what doth it profit? Even ſo Faith, if it hath not works, is dead.* Men are not ſo eaſily cozened, as we think they are. Diſcerning men will not be impoſed upon and put off with a formal and empty Profeſſion of Faith, when there is nothing in our lives to anſwer it. It is not ſtanding up in the Church, and profeſſing that we believe in God, and in *Jeſus Chriſt*, that he was Born, and Died, and Roſe again, and at the end of the World will come to Judge the quick and the dead, that will perſwade men that we are Chriſtians. Men will look into our lives, and examine our actions, and enquire into our Converſations; by theſe they will judge of the Truth and Reality of our Profeſſion. Let us not delude our ſelves, and think to paſs for Chriſtians upon theſe terms, among

among any that know how to make a true judgment of things. We may cozen our ſelves: but we cannot cheat others, who are not ſo partial to us, as we are apt to be to our ſelves. It is not our winking, that hinders others from ſeeing us. Sermon X.

Nay, I go farther, It is not an earneſt contending for fundamental Articles of our Chriſtian Faith, if we live contrary to them, that will ſatisfie any wiſe Man that we believe them; much leſs an intemperate zeal for indifferent Opinions in Religion. Such were the Doctrines concerning the Neceſſity on the one hand, and the Unlawfulneſs of Circumciſion on the other: but the Aſſent to the one opinion or the other in theſe matters, *neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion; but faith that worketh by love, the new creature, the keeping of the commandments of God,* as the Apoſtle in ſeveral places expreſſeth it. Men ſtand much upon the title of *Orthodox*, by which is uſually underſtood, not believing the Doctrine of Chriſt or his Apoſtles, but ſuch Opinions as are in vogue among ſuch a

Volume XII.

Party, ſuch Syſtems of Divinity as have been compiled in haſte by thoſe whom we have in admiration; and whatever is not conſonant to theſe little bodies of Divinity, tho' poſſibly it agree well enough with the Word of God, is Error and Hereſie; and whoever maintains it, can hardly paſs for a Chriſtian among ſome angry and perverſe people. I do not intend to plead for any Error; but I would not have Chriſtianity chiefly meaſur'd by matters of Opinion. I know no ſuch Error and Hereſie as a wicked life. That Man believes the Goſpel beſt, who lives moſt according to it. Tho' no Man can have a worſe opinion of the *Socinian* Doctrine than I have, yet I had rather a Man ſhould deny the ſatisfaction of Chriſt; than believe it, and abuſe it to the encouragement of ſin. Of the two, I have more hopes of him that denies the Divinity of Chriſt, and lives otherwiſe ſoberly, and righteouſly, and godly in the World, than of the Man who owns Chriſt to be the Son of God, and lives like a Child of the Devil.

2. Such

Sermon X.

2. Such a Faith as hath not an answerable life, will be ineffectual to the purpose of Justification and Salvation. St. *James* tells us, it is *a dead Faith, and profits nothing*, that no Man is justified by it, nor will it save any Man. *Christ is the author of eternal Salvation to them who* so believe his Doctrine as *to obey it*; *he will come in flaming fire, to render vengeance*, not only *to them that do not believe*, but *to them that do not obey the Gospel.* It will not be sufficient at the day of Judgment, to plead our profession of Faith in Christ, and to say *Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out Devils, and in thy name have done many wondrous works?* Doing all this in Christ's name, implies that they profess to believe in him: but notwithstanding all this, if they be *workers of iniquity*, Christ will say to such, *depart from me, I know you not.* If our Saviour make a true and proper representation of the day of Judgment, and the proceedings of it, *Mat.* 25. mens Faith shall then be tried by the real Fruits and Effects of it; then the enquiry

Volume XII.

ſhall be, how men have lived? what good they have done, or omitted and neglected? and accordingly ſentence will be paſt upon them. Nay, ſuch a Faith is ſo far from ſaving, that it will be an aggravation of our condemnation, and ſink us the deeper into Hell. *There is one that condemneth you, even* Jeſus *in whom ye truſt.*

Secondly, A life unſuitable to our belief is the high way to Infidelity and and Atheiſm, to bring others and our ſelves to it.

1. To bring others to Infidelity and Atheiſm, and to confirm them in it. What can be a more effectual bar to keep Heathens, and Jews, and Turks, from entertaining the Goſpel? What can be a greater confirmation of them in their infidelity, than ſo to miſrepreſent Chriſtian Religion to them, as we do by our unſuitable lives? What can be a ſtronger prejudice againſt it, to men who do not look narrowly into it, but only ſee it at a diſtance, than to ſee what Fruit it produces in the lives of Chriſtians? May they not invert

vert that proverbial Speech of our Saviour's, *Does a vine ſend forth thorns?* If Chriſtianity were ſuch a holy Inſtitution, how comes it to paſs that Chriſtians are ſo wicked? If *Jeſus Chriſt* were ſo excellent a Maſter, we ſhould ſee it in his Scholars; *ſi Chriſtus ſancta docuiſſet, Chriſtiani ſanctè vixiſſent*, as *Salvian* ſpeaks. And it is the way to bring men to Atheiſm. What more like to take men off from all Religion, than to ſee the Religion, which pretends to be the beſt in the World, repreſented by the lives of Chriſtians at ſuch a diſadvantage, as if it were a barren, and fruitleſs, and ineffectual thing, and as if they who profeſs it, did believe it to be a lie, and gave no credit at all to the Doctrines of it. Sermon X.

2. It is the way to bring our ſelves to Infidelity and Atheiſm. As an erroneous Judgment and Underſtanding hath uſually an evil influence upon mens lives, ſo much more a vicious and corrupt life hath a bad influence upon mens underſtandings. It is ſo uneaſie

Volume XII.

uneaſie a thing for men to act contrary to their Reaſon, and againſt the dictates of their Underſtandings, that men for their own quiet, and in their own defence, will bend their Judgments, and make them comply with the intereſt of their Luſts. Mens Affections, which way ſoever they incline, ſet a byaſs upon their Underſtandings; and this doth not only proceed from the Nature of the thing, but from the juſt Judgment of God. 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 10, 11, 12. the Apoſtle tells us, that *thoſe who receive not the the truth in the love of it, that they may be ſaved*; God will *ſend them ſtrong deluſions, to believe lies*; *that they all may be damned, who believe not the truth, but have pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs.* If men once *have pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs*, it will not be long before they give over *believing the truth*, becauſe God by his juſt Judgment will give them over to themſelves, to follow the byaſs of their own corrupt hearts, which inclines them *to believe lies*. Of all perſons in the world, a wicked and unholy Chriſtan, is moſt like to turn a ſpeculative Infidel and Atheiſt; and none ſo like to fall into this groſs

groſs darkneſs, as thoſe who reſiſt and quench ſo great a light as that of the Goſpel is, which they profeſs to believe. Sermon X.

SER-

SERMON XI.

Of the Miracles wrought in Confirmation of Chriſtianity.

HEB. II. 4.

God alſo bearing them witneſs, both with ſigns and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the holy Ghoſt, according to his own will?

WHoever impartially conſiders the Chriſtian Religion, cannot but acknowledge the Laws and Precepts of it to be ſo reaſonable; and the Practice of them ſo evidently to tend, not only to the Happineſs of particular Perſons, but to the Peace and Welfare of the World; and the

 Promi-

Volume XII.

Promiſes and Threatnings of the Goſpel, which are the great Motives to perſwade men to the Obedience of thoſe Laws, to be ſo agreeable to the natural hopes and fears which Mankind were always poſſeſt withal; that upon this Conſideration, it might juſtly be expected, that the Doctrine of Chriſtianity, upon the firſt publication of it, ſhould have been entertain'd with a readineſs of mind proportionable to the reaſonableneſs of it.

Or if the bare Reaſonableneſs of it be not thought inducement enough, we may eaſily imagine, how God, if he had pleaſed, could upon the firſt appearance of this Religion in the World, have given it ſuch advantages, as would mightily have contributed to the more eaſie reception and entertainment of it. He could have ordered things ſo, that our Bleſſed Saviour, the Author of this Doctrine, ſhould have been, as the *Jews* expected, a great Temporal Monarch; he could have raiſed him to that dignity, and have armed him with that Authority, as muſt have given him a mighty

mighty power and influence over Mankind, and would have gained the Great, and the Wise, and the Learned, to have been active instruments in the propagating of this Religion, and in perswading men to the embracing of it.

But he, *whose ways are above our ways, and whose thoughts are above our thoughts, as the heavens are above the earth*, did not think fit to have it promoted and carried on this way; nay, he seems on purpose to have strip'd it of all secular advantages, that it might be perfectly free from all suspition of a worldly interest and design, and that it might be evident to all the World, that is was *a plant which his own right hand had planted*; and that it did not owe its establishment to the Authority, and Wisdom, and Contrivance of men, but to the power of God, and to the immediate favour and contrivance of Heaven.

And now being thus destitute of all worldly assistance, tho' never so reasonable in it self, it was not likely that it

Volume XII.

ſo ſeverely puniſh'd, what might they expect would be the fate of thoſe who ſhould ſlight and reject the Goſpel? *If the word ſpoken by Angels was ſtedfaſt, and every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience received a juſt recompence of reward*; *How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation, which at firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him*! *God alſo bearing them witneſs, with ſigns and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the holy Ghoſt, according to his own will.* Συνεπιμαρτυροῦντος τοῦ θεοῦ, *God adjoyning this farther teſtimony of ſigns and wonders* The Apoſtles teſtified what they had heard from our Lord; and to give credit and confirmation to their teſtimony, God was pleaſed to endow them with miraculous gifts, *he bare them witneſs with ſigns, and wonders, and miracles.* So likewiſe, *Acts* 14. 3. it is ſaid, that *God gave teſtimony to the word of his grace, granting ſigns and wonders to be done by the Apoſtles.* Sometimes there are more words put together, to expreſs the giving of this miraculous Power. *Acts* 2. 22. *Jeſus of Nazareth approved of God by mira-*

miracles, and wonders, and ſigns. 2 Cor. 12. 12. St. *Paul*, ſpeaking of himſelf, ſays, *The ſigns of an Apoſtle were wrought among you, in all patience, in ſigns, and wonders, and miracles.* Theſe were the marks of an extraordinary and immediate Commiſſion, ſuch as was that of the Apoſtles. Sermon XI.

It is to no purpoſe nicely to enquire into the difference of theſe words, σημεῖα, τέρατα, δυνάμεις, *ſigns, wonders, and miracles*, becauſe in all probability, there is no difference intended, it being the manner of the *Hebrews*, when they would expreſs a great thing, or a great degree of any thing, to heap ſeveral words together, ſignifying the ſame thing. So we find *Deut.* 5. 6. *Thou ſhalt love thy Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy might*, that is, Greatly, with a very ardent and intenſe degree of affection. So likewiſe in the Text, *God* is ſaid to *bear witneſs to the Apoſtles with ſigns, and wonders, and miracles*, that is, in a very eminent and extraordinary manner, by great and wonderful Miracles.

Volume XII.

From theſe words, *three* things offer themſelves to our Conſideration.

Firſt, That Miracles are a Divine Teſtimony given to a Perſon or Doctrine. *God bearing them teſtimony, by ſigns, and wonders, and Miracles.*

Secondly, That God gave this Teſtimony to the Apoſtles, and firſt Preachers of Chriſtianity, in a very eminent manner: for ſo the Phraſe ſignifies, ſo many words being multiplied to expreſs the greatneſs of the thing.

Thirdly, We will conſider the Reaſon why Miracles are now ceaſed in the Church, and have been for ſeveral Ages, ſo that there have been no footſteps of them for a long time.

Firſt, That Miracles are a Divine Teſtimony given to a Perſon or Doctrine. *God* is here ſaid, *to bear witneſs to the Apoſtles, with ſigns, and wonders, and divers miracles*; that is, the Miracles which God enabled them

to

to work, were an evidence that their Doctrine was from God.

And becauſe there is ſome difficulty in this Argument, therefore, that we may the more diſtinctly underſtand of what force this Argument or Teſtimony of Miracles is to prove the Divinity of any Perſon or Doctrine, it will be requiſite clearly to ſtate theſe *two* things.

I. What a Miracle is.

II. In what Circumſtances, and with what Limitations, Miracles are a ſufficient Teſtimony to the Truth and Divinity of any Doctrine. The clearing of theſe *two* things ſhall be my work at this time.

I. What a Miracle is. The ſhorteſt and plaineſt deſcription I can give of it, is this, that it is a ſupernatural Effect evident and wonderful to ſenſe. So that there are *two* things neceſſary to a Miracle.

1. That it be a ſupernatural Effect.

Volume XII.

2. That it be evident and wonderful to ſenſe.

1. That it be a ſupernatural Effect. By a ſupernatural Effect, I mean ſuch an Effect, as either in it ſelf, and in its own Nature, or in the manner and Circumſtances of it, exceeds any natural Power that we know of to produce it. For there are ſome things that are miraculous in themſelves; others that are only miraculous in the manner and circumſtances of their operation. For inſtance, the Reſurrection of one from the dead, is a thing which in it ſelf is ſupernatural, and an Effect above any Power that we know of in Nature to produce; but the healing of ſeveral Diſeaſes, and the ſpeaking of Languages, are not things which are in themſelves, and in their Nature ſupernatural: for we ſee that they may be acquired by natural skill and induſtry: but to heal all ſorts of Diſeaſes, in an inſtant, and by a word, and without the application of natural means; and on a ſudden to ſpeak Languages which a Man never learned; theſe are things, which tho'

tho' they be not in their Nature, yet in ſuch Circumſtances as theſe, they are ſupernatural.

I ſay, that a Supernatural Effect, is that which is above any natural Power that we know of to produce; by which I do not mean, that Miracles are always an immediate Effect of the Divine Power, and conſequently that God alone can work them. For Angels good or bad may do ſuch things, as exceed any natural Power known to us, and ſuch as we cannot diſtinguiſh by any certain Marks and Characters from thoſe Effects which are wrought by the immediate Power of God; and if we cannot diſtinguiſh them, they are equally Miracles to us. When the Angel ſlew 185000. in the Camp of the *Aſſyrians* in one night, this ought in all reaſon to be reckoned a Miracle; and yet this, tho' done by the Command of God, an Angel might do by his own Power and Strength; for *they excell in ſtrength*: but what limitations to ſet to their Power, we cannot tell, only it is finite; ſo that excepting thoſe things, which the Scripture hath peculiarly

Volume XII.

appropriated to God, we cannot ſay what it is that an Angel cannot do.

The ſame may be ſaid concerning evil Angels. The Devil may work wonders, or aſſiſt his Inſtruments to work them. So *Pharaoh*'s Magicians wrought ſeveral Miracles by the power of the Devil, and did ſome of the very ſame things that *Moſes* and *Aaron* did, either really or in appearance, and it is all one whether. For he, who to mens Senſes, turns a Rod into a Serpent, works as great a Miracle to me, as he who really does it; and if I am not to believe a thing to be a Miracle, when to my Senſes it appears to be wrought, I am never to believe any, unleſs I could make ſome difference between thoſe Miracles which are real, and thoſe that only appear to be wrought; for if we know not how to diſtinguiſh them, they are to us all one as if they were real: but if they may be diſtinguiſh'd, then there will be need of another Miracle, to ſhew which are real and which not; and the ſame queſtion and doubt will

will ariſe about that Miracle, and ſo without end. Sermon XI.

So that I do not ſee what is gained by ſaying, that *Pharaoh*'s Magicians did only delude mens Senſes, but did not turn their Rods really in Serpents, as *Aaron* did his; becauſe this may be ſaid on one ſide, as well as on the other: for to the ſtanders by there was no difference, but the one ſeemed to the Senſes of the beholders, to be as real as the other; and the Text makes no difference, but ſays, *The magicians did in like manner; for they caſt down every man his rod, and they became Serpents*, only *Aaron*'s had this advantage, that *his rod ſwallowed up their rods*: but the main difference was here, *Moſes* and *Aaron* wrought ſuch Miracles, as the Magicians could not work, neither really, nor in appearance: for when *Aaron* by ſmiting the duſt with his Rod, had turned it into lice, it is ſaid that the Magicians attempted to do ſo with their Enchantments, but could not, and then they yielded, and acknowledged that it was *the finger of God*. And if they had not been thus plainly overcome, but could to all

all appearance of ſenſe, have done all
Volume thoſe things which *Moſes* and *Aaron*
XII. did, it might juſtly have been diſputed which had been the true Prophets.

So that the Devil and his inſtruments may work Miracles. *Moſes* plainly ſuppoſeth that a falſe Prophet, who comes to ſeduce the People to Idolatry, may work a true ſign or wonder, *Deut.* 13. 1, 2. *If there ariſe among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a ſign or a wonder; and the ſign or the wonder come to paſs, whereof he ſpake unto thee, ſaying, Let us go after other gods.* And our bleſſed Saviour expreſly fortells, *Matth.* 24. That *falſe Chriſts, and falſe Prophets ſhall ariſe after his death, and ſhew great ſigns and wonders.*

From all which it is evident, that it is not of the Eſſence of a Miracle, (as many have thought) that it be an immediate Effect of the Divine Power. It is ſufficient, that it exceed any natural Power that we know of to produce it. And if ſuch Effects be not

to

to be eſteemed Miracles, a Miracle would ſignifie nothing; becauſe no Man could know when it is wrought, nor diſtinguiſh it from thoſe Effects which appear to be miraculous, but are not. This is the *firſt* Property or Condition of a Miracle, that it be ſupernatural, that is, ſuch an Effect as exceeds any natural Power that we know of to produce it. But then,

2. There is another Condition alſo required to a Miracle, that it be an Effect evident and wonderful to Senſe: for if we do not ſee it, it is to us as if it were not, and can be no teſtimony or proof of any thing, becauſe it ſelf ſtands in need of another Miracle to give Teſtimony to it, and to prove that it was wrought; and neither in Scripture, nor in profane Authors, nor in common uſe of Speech, is any thing call'd a Miracle, but what falls under the notice of our Senſes; a Miracle being nothing elſe but a thing wonderful to ſenſe; and the very end and deſign of it, is to be a ſenſible proof and conviction to us of ſome thing which we do not ſee.

And

And for want of this Condition, Tranſubſtantiation, if it were true, would be no Miracle: it would indeed be very ſupernatural, but for all that it would not be a Sign or Wonder; for a Sign or Wonder is always a ſenſible thing, ſomething that is wonderful and aſtoniſhing to Senſe, otherwiſe it is no Sign or Wonder. That ſuch a change as is pretended in Tranſubſtantiation ſhould really be wrought, and yet there ſhould be no Sign and Appearance of it, is a thing very wonderful; but not to Senſe: for our Senſes perceive no change, the Bread and Wine to all our Senſes remaining juſt as they were before. Now that a thing ſhould remain to all appearance juſt as it was, hath nothing at all of wonder in it. We wonder indeed when we ſee a ſtrange thing done: but no Man wonders he ſees nothing done.

So that to ſpeak the truth, Tranſubſtantiation, if they will have it a Miracle, is ſuch a Miracle, as any Man may work, that hath but confidence to face men down that he works it, and

and the fortune to be believed. And however they of the Church of *Rome* are wont to magnifie their Prieſts, chiefly upon the account of this Miracle, which they ſay they can work every day, and every hour, if they pleaſe; yet I cannot underſtand, how it magnifies them ſo much: for when this great work (as they call it) is done, there is nothing more appears to be done, than if there were no Miracle. Now ſuch a Miracle, as to all appearance is no Miracle, I ſee no reaſon why a Proteſtant Miniſter may not work as often as he pleaſeth, as well as they: Or if he can but have the Patience to let it alone, it will work it ſelf: for certainly nothing in the World is eaſier than to let a thing be as it is, and by ſpeaking a few words over it, to make it juſt what it was before. In ſhort, a Miracle is a wonder to Senſe, and where a Man ſees nothing that is ſtrange done, there is no Miracle: for if he will call it a Miracle, when things remain juſt as they were, and no ſenſible change is made in them, every Man may every day work a thouſand ſuch Miracles. I come now in the

Sermon XI.

II. Place,

Volume XII.

II. Place, To conſider in what Circumſtances, and with what Cautions and Limitations Miracles do give Teſtimony to the Truth and Divinity of any Doctrine; for Inſtance, of the Chriſtian Doctrine: and for the clearing of this Matter, I ſhall lay down theſe Propoſitions.

1. That the entire Proof of the Chriſtian Doctrine or Religion, conſiſts of many Conſiderations, which taken together, make up a full Demonſtration of the Truth of it, when perhaps no one of them, taken ſingly and by it ſelf, is a convincing and undeniable proof.

The Chriſtian Religion hath all the Characters of Divinity upon it, which any Religion can be expected to have, whether we conſider the Doctrine of it, in which there is nothing unworthy of God; for it makes ſuch a repreſentation of God, and gives ſuch directions concerning his Worſhip, as is moſt agreeable to thoſe apprehenſions which the wiſeſt of men have always had of God, and of that ſervice which is moſt

moſt proper to be given to him. Indeed it declares ſomething concerning God, which is very myſterious and paſt our Comprehenſions: but this ought not to offend us, ſince natural light always did acknowledge the Divine Nature to be incomprehenſible. Sermon XI.

The Precepts likewiſe of this Religion are highly reaſonable, and ſuch as plainly tend to the Perfection and Happineſs of human Nature; and the Arguments to enforce theſe Precepts, are not only very powerful in themſelves, but very ſuitable to the natural hopes and fears of men.

Or if we conſider the Author of this Doctrine, our bleſſed Saviour, he he will appear to be a Divine Perſon, and *a teacher ſent from God*, by the clear Predictions concerning him long before he came, which when he came were exactly fulfill'd in him; by the Miracles he wrought to give teſtimony of him; by the eminent Holineſs and Virtue of his life; and by innumerable things which he foretold concerning himſelf, the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*,

Volume XII.

and the diſperſion of the *Jewiſh* Nation, and the ſucceſs of his Doctrine in the World, which were all afterwards punctually accompliſh'd. All theſe proved him to be an extraordinary Perſon. But he was likewiſe declared to be *the Son of God*, by a voice from Heaven, and by his Reſurrection from the dead.

Or if we conſider the firſt Publiſhers of this Doctrine, to whom *God bare witneſs, with ſigns and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the holy Ghoſt*; and the wonderful ſucceſs they met withal, notwithſtanding the outward meanneſs of their Perſons, inſomuch that their Doctrine very ſuddenly prevail'd, and paſt like lightning through the World, and in the ſpace of a few years, ſpread it ſelf beyond the utmoſt bounds of the vaſt *Roman* Empire, and this in deſpite of the moſt powerful oppoſition and fierceſt Perſecutions that ever were raiſed againſt any Religion; ſo that like the Children of *Iſrael* in *Ægypt* it did thrive under affliction, and the more it was oppreſt, the more it grew

and

and multiplyed; becauſe there was a Divine Power that did viſibly accompany the firſt Publiſhers of it, and men *were not able to reſiſt the ſpirit whereby they ſpake.* Sermon XI.

All theſe together make up a full and convincing Demonſtration of the Truth and Divinity of the Chriſtian Doctrine: and yet perhaps no one of theſe alone is a ſufficient proof of it. For tho' a Doctrine be never ſo reaſonable in it ſelf, this is no certain Argument that it is from God, if no Teſtimony from Heaven be given to it; becauſe it may be the reſult and iſſue of human Reaſon and Diſcourſe: and tho' a Doctrine be atteſted by Miracles, yet the matter of it may be ſo unreaſonable and abſurd, ſo unworthy of God, and ſo contrary to the natural notions which men have of him, that no Miracles can be ſufficient to give confirmation to it; and therefore in ſome caſes the Scripture forbids men to hearken to a Prophet, tho' he work a Miracle. *Deut.* 13. 1, 2, 3. *If there ariſe among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and*

giveth thee a ſign, or a wonder; and the ſign or the wonder come to paſs, whereof he ſpake unto thee, ſaying, Let us go after other gods (which thou haſt not known) and let us ſerve them: Thou ſhalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet. And the reaſon is given, *ver.* 5. *Becauſe he hath ſpoken to turn you away from the Lord your God.* From whence it is plain, that a Miracle is not ſufficient to eſtabliſh the Worſhip of a falſe God.

The ſum of what I have ſaid is this, That we do not found our Belief of Chriſtianity upon any one Argument taken by it ſelf; but upon the whole Evidence which we are able to produce for it, in which there is nothing wanting that is proper and reaſonable to prove any Religion to be from God.

2. But yet Miracles are the principal external Proof and Confirmation of the Divinity of a Doctrine. I told you before, that ſome Doctrines are ſo abſurd, that a Miracle is not a ſufficient proof of them: but if a Doctrine be ſuch as is no ways unworthy of God, nor

nor contrary to thoſe notions which we have of him, Miracles are the higheſt Teſtimony that can be given to it, and have always been owned by Mankind for an evidence of inſpiration. And therefore *Nicodemus* takes it for an acknowleg'd Principle, that Miracles are a ſign of *a teacher ſent from God*, John 3. 2. *We know that thou art a teacher come from God: for none can do theſe miracles which thou doſt, except God be with him.* And the Scripture conſtantly reſolves the Divinity of any Perſon or Doctrine into Miracles, as the chief external Evidence that they are from God. This was the Teſtimony which God gave to *Moſes*, to ſatisfie the people of *Iſrael* that he had ſent him, *Exod.* 4. 1. *And Moſes anſwered, and ſaid, But behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will ſay, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.* Upon this God tells *Moſes*, that he would give him a power of Miracles, to be an Evidence to them, that *they may believe, that the God of their Fathers, of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.* And all along in the Old Teſtament, when

Volume XII.

God ſent his Prophets to make any new Revelation, or upon any extraordinary Meſſage, he always gave credit to them, by ſome Sign or Wonder. And when he ſent his Son into the World, he bare Witneſs to him, by more and greater Miracles than *Moſes* or any of the Prophets had wrought. And to this Teſtimony both our Saviour himſelf and the Apoſtles appeal, as the great Evidence of the Divinity of their Doctrine. When *John* the Baptiſt ſent his Diſciples to our Saviour, to be ſatisfied whether he were the *Meſſias*, he refers them to his Miracles, *Matth.* 11. 4, 5. *Go and ſhew* John *again thoſe things which ye do hear and ſee. The blind receive their ſight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleanſed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raiſed up.* And *John.* 5. 36. *But I have greater witneſs than that of* John: *for the works which the father hath given me to finiſh, the ſame works that I do, bear witneſs of me, that the father hath ſent me.* And *Acts* 2. 22. Jeſus *of* Nazareth, *a man approved of God among you,* ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀποδεδειγμένον εἰς ὑμᾶς, *a man demonſtrated by God to you, by miracles, and*

and wonders, and ſigns, which he did in the midſt of you. And *Acts* 14. 3. it is ſaid, that when the Apoſtles preached the Goſpel, *God gave teſtimony unto the word of his grace, and granted ſigns and wonders to be done by their hands.* From all which it is plain, that our Religion appeals to Miracles, as the great external Confirmation of it. Sermon XI.

3. Eſpecially if Miracles have all the Circumſtances of advantage given to them which they are capable of; if they be many and great, publick and unqueſtionable, and univerſal, and of long continuance. And ſuch were the Miracles wrought by *Moſes*, and by our Saviour and his Apoſtles, which for their Nature and Quality, for the number and continuance of them, and for all other Circumſtances, that may give credit to them, and argue them to be from God, are in no degree to be equalled by thoſe which any other Religion hath pretended to.

And in theſe Circumſtances, Miracles alone are in moſt caſes a ſufficient proof of the Divinity of a Doctrine:

Volume XII.

for there is a great deal of difference in reaſon to be made between one or two ſtrange and miraculous Effects, and thoſe not of the higheſt and moſt unqueſtionable rank of Miracles neither, privately wrought, and before few witneſſes: and a long continued ſeries of Miracles of all kinds, and ſuch as are univerſally acknowledged to be above the Power of Nature, and thoſe publickly wrought in the face and view of the World, in every City and Country, by a great many Perſons, for many years, yea for many ages together. The former may be doubted of, but the latter carry ſo ſenſible a conviction with them, that it is not credible, that the Divine Goodneſs ſhould permit ſo great and overpowering a Teſtimony to be given to a falſehood.

4. It cannot be denied, but that God doth ſometimes permit Miracles to be wrought for the countenancing of a falſe Doctrine. This the Heathens pretended to at their Temples and Oracles; and it is not incredible, that God ſhould permit the Devil to do ſeveral ſtrange and extraordinary things, tho' it be certain that

that there was a great deal of cheat and impoſture mingled with them. To be ſure the Scripture owns the working of Miracles by falſe Prophets. *Moſes* takes notice of it in his Law, and provides againſt it as a caſe that might happen; and our Saviour expreſly foretells it, *Matth.* 24. and ſo does St. *Paul*, 2 *Theſſ.* 2. that *the man of ſin ſhould come after the working of Satan, with power and ſigns, and wonders of lies*; that is, ſhould work Miracles to countenance his falſe and impious Doctrines. And the Scripture likewiſe tells us, for what reaſon God does ſometimes permit this to be done. For the tryal of the good. *Deut.* 13. 3. *For the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your hearts.* And for the hardning of the wicked, by the juſt judgment of God. 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 10, 11, 12. *Becauſe they received not the love of the truth, that they might be ſaved. And for this cauſe God ſhall ſend them ἐνέργειαν πλάνης, the efficacy of impoſture that they ſhould believe a lie; that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs.* Sermon XI.

5. And laſtly, God never permits Miracles to be wrought for the Confirmation of a falſe Doctrine, but he affords ſufficient marks, whereby thoſe who are free and impartial inquirers after Truth, and ſincere lovers of it, may diſtinguiſh Truth from Impoſture. So our Saviour tells us, that *the elect*, that is, the true and ſincere Chriſtians, ſhould not be deceived by the *ſigns and wonders* of *the falſe Chriſts and falſe Prophets*. And therefore he was not afraid of having the credit of his Doctrine weakned, by foretelling that falſe Prophets ſhould work Miracles; becauſe he knew, when the Devil had done his utmoſt, the difference would be apparent enough between the Confirmation which he had given to the Chriſtian Doctrine, and what the Devil ſhould be able to give to his Inſtruments. As,

1. Either the Doctrine would be abſurd in it ſelf, and ſuch as no Miracles can confirm. As in the caſe which *Moſes* inſtanceth in, of a Miracle wrought to ſeduce them from the Worſhip of the one true God, who is naturally

naturally known, to the Worſhip of I- Idols. Or elſe, Sermon XI.

2. It would be contrary to that Doctrine which had already had a far greater, and more Divine Confirmation. And this likewiſe is another reaſon intimated by *Moſes*, why the people ſhould not hearken to a Prophet that would ſeduce them to Idolatry, tho' he ſhould work a Miracle; *becauſe he hath ſpoken to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Ægypt*, that is, from that God who had demonſtrated himſelf to them by ſuch a ſeries of great and unqueſtionable Miracles, as ought in all reaſon to bear down any ſingle Sign and Wonder.

And the caſe is the ſame, if Miracles ſhould now be pretended for the confirmation of any thing plainly contrary to the Chriſtian Doctrine, which being eſtabliſh'd by ſuch Miracles as never were wrought in the World upon any other occaſion, it cannot be thought reaſonable, that any Evidence inferiour to this, ſhould be able to controul

Volume XII.

controul it, or to give credit to any thing that contradicted it. And in this caſe the Apoſtle hath expreſly forbidden Chriſtians to hearken to a contrary Doctrine, *tho' they themſelves, or an Angel from heaven ſhould preach it*, Gal. 1. 8. Therefore St. *Paul* expreſly lays down this Rule, whereby we may judge what miraculous Powers are from the Spirit of God, and what not, 1 *Cor.* 12. 1. *Now concerning ſpiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant*, that is, what miraculous gifts are from the Spirit of God, and what not; and then, *ver.* 3. he gives this Rule, *Wherefore I give you to underſtand, that no man ſpeaking by the ſpirit of God, calleth* Jeſus *accurſed: and that no man can ſay, that* Jeſus *is the Lord, but by the holy Ghoſt*; that is, if any Man pretend to be inſpired, and to be endowed with a Miraculous Power, and yet blaſphemeth Chriſt, this Spirit is not from God: but if any Man be endowed with this Power, and acknowledge Chriſt, we may ſafely conclude this Power to be from the Holy Ghoſt. The very ſame Rule St. *John* lays down yet more plainly, 1 *John* 4. 1, 2, 3. *Believe*

lieve not every ſpirit, that is, not every one that pretends to the Gifts and Inſpirations of the Spirit; *but try the ſpirits, whether they are of God: becauſe many falſe prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the ſpirit of God: every ſpirit that confeſſeth that* Jeſus Chriſt *is come in the fleſh, is of God: and every ſpirit that confeſſeth not that* Jeſus Chriſt *is come in the fleſh, is not of God.* And, *ver. 6. We are of God; he that knoweth God, heareth us: he that is not of God, heareth not us: hereby know we the ſpirit of truth, and the ſpirit of errour.* This ſeems at firſt ſight to be a very odd Rule, and what every falſe teacher, and every ſect may lay down in favour of themſelves, *he that knoweth God, heareth us: he that knoweth not God, heareth not us*; and nothing can make it reaſonable, but the conſideration that the Chriſtian Religion being already ſo abundantly confirmed beyond contradiction, is it ſelf become a Rule to try Spirits or Miracles by. Or, Sermon XI.

3. The Miracles which falſe Prophets work, are preſently confuted and

Volume XII.

and upon the ſpot. Thus *Moſes* confuted and conquered *Pharaoh*'s Magicians, by working Miracles which they could not work, which forced them to yield the cauſe, and acknowledge that it was *the finger of God.* And ſo likewiſe *Simon Magus*, who had gained ſo great a Reputation among the people by his Sorceries, as to be call'd *the mighty power of God*, was confuted by the Apoſtles, who by the laying on of hands, conferr'd a miraculous Power on men, which he not being able to do, would have purchaſed it with Mony. And ſo *Elymas* the Sorcerer was ſtruck blind by St. *Paul.* And the Miracles of the Heathen Temples and Oracles, upon the Preaching of the Goſpel, ceaſed, as being aſhamed of themſelves; as *Porphyry*, one of the bittereſt Enemies of Chriſtianity, does expreſly acknowledge. Or elſe,

Laſtly, The Miracles wrought, or pretended to be wrought to confirm falſe Doctrines, are ſuch, as do ſome way or other confute themſelves; or if they be real, are ſufficiently detected to be the pranks of the Devil, and not

not the great and glorious Works of God. Such were the Miracles of the heathen deities, wrought ſo privately and obſcurely, and confeſſedly mix'd with ſo much of Impoſture, as to bring a juſt ſuſpicion upon them, that when they were real, the Devil was the Author of them. And ſuch were the Miracles which are attributed to *Mahomet*; either groſly abſurd and ridiculous, as that of part of the Moon coming down into his ſleeve, and his remanding it to its place again; or elſe deſtitute of all proof and witneſs, as that of a *Camel*'s ſpeaking to him by night; and his *Pigeon* whiſpering to him in the Ear; which if it had been intended for a Miracle, the *Pigeon* ſhould not have whiſpered, but have ſpoken out, that others might have heard it. But *Mahomet* was ſo conſcious to himſelf of his own defect in point of Miracles, that he laid no weight upon them, *being*, as he ſaid, *not ſent to convert the world by Miracles; but to conquer them by force of arms.* Sermon XI.

And now I am ſorry I have occaſion to ſay it, but it is too true, that the

Volume XII.

the Miracles pretended to by the Church of *Rome*, for the confirmation of their erroneous Doctrines, are of the ſame ſtamp with theſe, taxed by ſeveral of their beſt Writers of Impoſture and Forgery, of Fable and Romance, ſo extravagant and freakiſh and fantaſtical, wrought without any neceſſity, and ſerving to no wiſe end, that they are ſo far from giving credit to their Doctrines, that they are a mighty ſcandal to them, and to our common Chriſtianity: whereas the truly Divine Miracles, reported to us in Scripture, how unlike are they to theſe? How venerable in themſelves, and in all the Circumſtances with which they are related? never wrought but upon great Neceſſity, and for excellent Ends, full of Benefit and Advantage, of Mercy and Compaſſion to Mankind; and in a word, ſuch as are every way worthy of their Author, having plain Characters of the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs ſtampt upon them.

And thus I have done with the *firſt* thing I propounded to ſpeak to, namely, that Miracles are a Divine Teſtimony;

mony; and in what Circumſtances, and with what Cautions and Limitations they are ſo. I ſhall at preſent only draw ſome Inferences from what hath been diſcourſed upon this Argument. Sermon XI.

1. What hath been ſaid may ſatisfie us of the Truth and Divinity of the Chriſtian Doctrine, which had ſo eminent a Teſtimony given to it from Heaven, and did at firſt ſo ſtrangely prevail in the World, contrary to all human probability, *not by might nor by power; but by the ſpirit of the Lord.* No Man can ſuppoſe a Religion in Circumſtances of greater diſadvantage, and upon all human accounts more unlikely to ſuſtain and bear up it ſelf, than Chriſtianity was. The firſt appearance of it was ſo weak, its beginnings ſo ſmall, and the inſtruments imployed in the propagation of it ſo mean and deſpicable, that no Man but would have concluded it muſt preſently have ſunk and come to nought; and no other reaſon can be given of the ſtrange ſucceſs and prevalency of it, but that *it was of God*, and

Volume XII.

and therefore *it could not be overthrown.*

2. From hence we may judge how groundleſs the pretences are, which men now a-days make to inſpiration and infallibility; becauſe this is not to be proved, and made out any other way but by Miracles. For either we muſt believe every pretence of this kind; and then we are at the mercy of every crafty and confident Man, to be led by him into what deluſions he pleaſes: or we muſt only believe thoſe who give ſome Teſtimony of their inſpiration: but the evidence of Inſpiration was always Miracles. This is the Teſtimony which God hath always given to thoſe whom he hath ſent upon an extraordinary Meſſage to Mankind. And this is that which we reaſonably demand of our modern Enthuſiaſts, and of the great pretender to infallibility, the Biſhop of *Rome*; becauſe nothing can be more vain, than for men to pretend to Inſpiration, and an infallible Spirit, without Miracles. And yet I cannot learn that the *Popes* themſelves, among all

all their boundleſs Privileges and Powers, do ſo much as pretend to a Power of Miracles, which yet is the only thing that can in Reaſon ſupport their Pretences to Infallibility. Sermon XI.

3. You ſee what an immediate Teſtimony from Heaven God was pleaſed to give to the firſt Preachers of the Chriſtian Doctrine, to qualifie them, with any probability of ſucceſs, to conteſt with the violent and almoſt invincible Prejudices of men educated in a contrary Religion, and which had the ſecular Authority and Laws on its ſide. For having this Divine Seal given to their Commiſſion, they did as it were carry the Letters Patents of Heaven in their hands, and an Authority paramount to that of human Laws. And therefore the Wiſdom of God, which does nothing which is ſuperfluous and unneceſſary, did not think the Apoſtles ſufficiently armed and appointed for this Deſign, by a Commiſſion from the Mouth of the Son of God, without this Divine Seal and Teſti-

Volume XII.

mony of Miracles, as a viſible Evidence of their Divine Commiſſion. And therefore our Saviour, after he had Commiſſioned them *to preach the Goſpel to all Nations*, commanded them not to enter upon this work, nor *to depart from* Jeruſalem, *till they had received the promiſe of the Father*; that is, the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, *Acts* 1. 4. And ſo our Saviour explains it, *Luke* 24. 47. where, after he had commanded, *That repentance and remiſſion of ſins ſhould be preached in his Name among all Nations, beginning at Jeruſalem*, he adds, *ver.* 49. *And behold, I ſend the promiſe of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jeruſalem, until ye be indued with power from on high.* And to the ſame purpoſe, *Acts* 1. 8. *But ye ſhall receive power, after that the holy Ghoſt is come upon you*; by which, he tells us, they were qualified to be *witneſſes unto him, both in* Jeruſalem, *and in all* Judea, *and in* Samaria, *and unto the uttermoſt parts of the earth.*

4. And

Sermon XI.

4. And *laſtly*, The Conſideration of what hath been ſaid, doth juſtly upbraid us, that our Religion, which hath ſuch evident marks of Divinity upon it, and comes down to us confirmed by ſo many Miracles, ſhould yet have ſo little Efficacy upon the lives of the greateſt part of thoſe who call themſelves Chriſtians. 'Tis true, Miracles are now ceaſed among Chriſtians, our Religion being ſufficiently eſtabliſh'd by thoſe that were wrought at firſt; and now the greateſt Miracle in theſe latter Ages, is a good Man, a true and ſincere Chriſtian: but the Laws of Chriſtianity are ſtill the ſame; and the Motives and Arguments to a good life are the ſame; and tho' the miraculous Gifts of the Spirit have left the World, yet the Sealing and Sanctifying Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt do ſtill remain. We cannot now ſpeak all Languages, as the Apoſtles did: but we may do that which is much better, and more pleaſing to God; we may live holy and virtuous lives. We

Volume XII.

have not that Faith which works by Miracles: but we may have that which is far more excellent, the *Faith which works by Charity*; *which*, if we believe St. *Paul*, is more than *to ſpeak with the tongues of men and angels*, more than *to propheſie, and to underſtand all myſteries and all knowledge.*

The admirable Piety and Virtue of the firſt Chriſtians, are ſtill upon record for our imitation: but I know not how it comes to paſs, we chuſe rather lazily to admire thoſe Patterns, than vigorouſly to imitate them; as if the Holineſs of thoſe times were alſo miraculous, and not intended for the imitation of ſucceeding Ages; as if it were impoſſible for us now to lead ſuch lives as they did; as if Heaven and Earth, God and men, and all things were alter'd ſince that time; as if the Chriſtian Religion were now quite diſpirited, and had loſt all its vigour and force; and as if the Holy Spirit of God had to all intents and purpoſes forſaken the World,

World, and were retired to the Father.

Sermon XI.

But our Religion is ſtill the ſame it was; the Precepts of it as Reaſonable, and the Promiſes of it as Powerful as ever. God is ſtill the ſame he was; and *Chriſt* ſtill *at the right hand of God making interceſſion for us*; and the Holy Spirit of God ſtill ready to aſſiſt us, *to every good word and work.*

To conclude, We have, beyond compariſon, the beſt and moſt Reaſonable Religion in the World; a Religion which carries along with it the greateſt Evidence of its Truth, which contains the beſt Rules and Directions for a good life, which offers the moſt powerful aſſiſtance to the Obedience of its Laws, and gives the greateſt encouragements thereto, by the aſſurance of a bleſſed immortality in another World. Now the better our Religion is, our caſe is ſo much the worſe, if we be not made good by it. Philoſophy had ſome Effect upon the World to make

Volume XII.

ſome men temporate and chaſte, and juſt and honeſt in their lives. And the *Jewiſh* Religion (as weak and imperfect as it was, and tho' it was but *the ſhadow of good things to come*,) hath yet left us many eminent Examples of good and holy Men. What then ſhall become of us, if the beſt Inſtitution in the World, the bleſſed Goſpel of the Son of God, have leſs Effect upon us, than the Doctrine of *Pythagoras*, and the Law of *Moſes* had upon them? *How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation, which at firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him? God alſo bearing them witneſs with ſigns and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the holy Ghoſt, according to his own will. To which bleſſed and glorious Trinity be all honour and glory, now and for ever.*

SER-

SERMON XII.

Of the Miracles wrought in Confirmation of Chriſtianity.

The Second Sermon on this Text.

HEB. II. 4.

God alſo bearing them witneſs, both with ſigns and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the holy Ghoſt, according to his own will.

I Have begun to diſcourſe upon theſe words, from which I told you, *three* things offer themſelves to our Conſideration.

Volume XII.

First, That Miracles are a Divine Testimony to a Person or Doctrine. *God* is here said *to bear witness to the Apostles, by signs, and wonders, and miracles.*

Secondly, That God gave this Testimony to the Apostles, and first Publishers of the Gospel, in a very eminent manner; for so the phrase signifies, *God bearing them witness with signs, and wonders, and miracles*; so many words to the same sense, being purposely used to signifie the greatness of the thing.

Thirdly, The Reasons, why Miracles are now ceased in the Church, and have been for several Ages; so that there have been no footsteps of this miraculous Power for several Ages past. The *first* I have spoken to, and proceed now to the

Second Thing which I proposed to consider, *viz.* That God gave Testimony to the Apostles, and first Publishers of Christianity, in a very eminent manner; for so the expression in the

the Text ſignifies, where ſo many ſeveral words are uſed for the ſame thing, to expreſs according to the manner of the *Hebrew* Phraſe, the greatneſs of the thing, *God bearing them witneſs both with ſigns, and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the holy Ghoſt*, that is, with many and great Miracles, Καὶ μερισμοῖς, *and diſtributions of the holy Ghoſt, according to his own will*; that is, God diſtributed theſe ſeveral miraculous Powers and Gifts among the Apoſtles and firſt Preachers of the Goſpel; not all to every one of them, but ſome to one, and ſome to another, as to him ſeemed beſt, and was moſt for the Benefit and Edification of the Church. Sermon XII.

The Hiſtory of it in ſhort is this. When our bleſſed Saviour aſcended into Heaven, he promiſed to ſend down his Spirit in miraculous Gifts upon his Apoſtles, to give credit to his Doctrine, and to qualifie them for the more ſpeedy planting and propagating of it in the World; and accordingly, not many days after he was aſcended into Heaven, as an Evidence of the Power and Glory he was inveſted

ed

Volume XII.

ed withal, he, according to his promiſe immediately before his Aſcenſion, ſent down the Holy Ghoſt upon the Apoſtles in a viſible manner, that is, in the form of fiery cloven Tongues, as an emblem of one of the principal Gifts they were endowed withal, *viz.* the knowledge and ability of ſpeaking ſeveral Languages, which they had never learned. And this happened upon the day of *Pentecoſt*, that ſo the Goſpel might exactly correſpond to the Diſpenſation of the Law, which was the type and figure of it. And therefore as our Saviour dyed at the time of the Jewiſh *Paſſover*, which was the type of his Sufferings; ſo the Goſpel, which was the Perfection and fulfilling of the Law, began to be publiſh'd at the very ſame time that the Law was given from Mount *Sinai*, *viz.* at the end of the ſeven weeks after the *Paſſover*. For at this time the Holy Ghoſt deſcended upon the Apoſtles in miraculous Powers and Gifts; *when* this new *law* was *to come forth out of Sion, and the law of the Lord from Jeruſalem.*

And

Sermon XII.

And among theſe Gifts, the *firſt* we find mentioned was the gift of Tongues; without which, the Goſpel muſt of neceſſity have been very ſlowly propagated in the World: for had the Apoſtles been firſt to learn the ſeveral Languages of the Nations they were to Preach to, how tedious a work would that have been? it requiring the induſtry of ſome years, to gain ſo perfect a maſtery of a ſtrange Language, as to be able to uſe it with that freedom and readineſs which is neceſſary for ſuch a work.

And this Gift all the Apoſtles had, becauſe they had all occaſion for it, being deſigned by our Saviour to be the chief Publiſhers of his Goſpel to the World. And this Gift did alſo continually reſide upon them, and not only at ſome times, as ſome other Gifts did, becauſe they had conſtant uſe of this Gift of Tongues.

The interpreting of things ſpoken in a ſtrange Tongue was alſo a Gift diſtinct from the Gift of Tongues, tho' attending it; inſomuchthat ſome Perſons

Volume XII.

Perſons had one, and ſome the other. So the Apoſtle tells us, 1 *Cor.* 12. 10. *To one is given divers kinds of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues.* The occaſion of which was plainly this; it might happen, and often did, that the Auditory might conſiſt of people of ſeveral Nations; now becauſe no Man could ſpeak more than one Language at once, it was convenient others ſhould have the gift of interpreting what was ſpoken, to thoſe who underſtood not the Language in which it was ſpoken, that ſo all might receive the benefit of what was delivered, and be edified thereby. So that here were two ſeveral Gifts ſerving the ſame end, *viz.* the conveying of the knowledge of the Goſpel to Mankind, in a more ſpeedy way than it could have been done by ordinary means; and theſe were very plain and ſenſible Miracles, unqueſtionably ſupernatural, and evident to the ſenſes of all men. So that the Goſpel, where ever it was Preached, carried its own Teſtimony along with it, and was confirmed by the very manner of its conveyance and delivery: and well might men entertain

entertain it as a Divine Doctrine, when the very Manner and the Means whereby it was publiſh'd was a Miracle.

And here I cannot but take notice, how contrary the arts and the ways of the Church of *Rome* are, to the methods of God; and that when he was at the expence of ſo many Miracles to publiſh this Doctrine to the World, they ſhould uſe ſo much induſtry and violence to conceal it. God was pleaſed to endow the firſt Preachers of it with the Gift of Tongues, that *their ſound might go into all the earth, and their word to the end of the world,* that there might be no Nation nor Language where this ſaving knowledge might not come, that the Sermons which they Preached, and the Prayers which they put up to God in publick, for themſelves and the people, and all the Offices of Religion which they performed, might be fully underſtood by all, and that all might joyn in them, and have the benefit and comfort of them; that their underſtandings might be informed and enlighted by what was ſpoken, and their affections raiſed

Volume XII.

and warmed by their underſtandings, and their wills excited by their affections, and that the Effect of all this might appear in their lives and practice. Thus it was in the Primitive Chriſtian Church: but in the Church of *Rome*, things are managed in a quite contrary way, and have been for ſeveral Ages. The Doctrine of Salvation, as it is contained and delivered in the holy Scripture, is *a ſealed book*, which the people are not thought *worthy to open or look into*. This *bread of life which came down from heaven*, is like *the ſhew-bread* among the *Jews*, *which none may eat but the prieſt only*, unleſs it be by extraordinary favour, and particular Licence from the Biſhop. The people indeed come together, and are preſent at the Prayers and Devotion of the Prieſt; but the Prieſt *that prays is a barbarian to them*, and all the while *the underſtanding* of the people *is unfruitful*, and *they cannot ſay Amen, becauſe they underſtand not what he ſays*.

But let any Man ſhew me the leaſt intimation in Scripture or Antiquity, that

that our Saviour, or his Apoſtles, or the Primitive Church, ever uſed this way; and yet the danger of error and hereſie, was as great then, at it is now. So that the Church of *Rome* muſt pretend themſelves wiſer than our Saviour and his Apoſtles; and to be more careful to prevent hereſie in the Church, than they were. This they are loth to ſay; and yet they muſt ſay it, if they will juſtifie their own doings. But the plain truth is, there is another and truer Reaſon for it, tho' they are not willing to own it, and that is this; If the Scriptures were permitted to the people in a Language which they underſtand, the Errors of their Church would be diſcovered and laid open, and men would plainly diſcern how contrary many of their Doctrines and Practices are, to thoſe of our Saviour and his Apoſtles: for *every one that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be diſcovered.*

Sermon XII.

Secondly, The next miraculous Gift I ſhall mention after the Gift of Tongues, is the Gift of Propheſie, or foretelling things future, which was

Volume XII.

always looked upon as an Evidence of inſpiration. And this we find mentioned, 1 *Cor.* 12. 10. *To another Propheſie*, and in ſeveral other places; and to this Gift, the Apoſtle gives a great preeminence, 1 *Cor.* 14. 1. *Covet ſpiritual gifts: but rather that ye may propheſie*; becauſe foretelling of things to come, was always eſteemed by Mankind an Evidence of a Perſon divinely inſpired, and conſequently, was one of the greateſt Teſtimonies of the Truth of Chriſtianity. And this the Angel that appeared to St. *John* particularly takes notice of, *Rev.* 19. 10. *The teſtimony of Jeſus is the ſpirit of propheſie.* The Propheſies of that Book were to be a ſtanding Teſtimony of the truth of Chriſtianity in all Ages of the Church.

Thirdly, The next Gift is that of healing all manner of Diſeaſes. And this the Apoſtles ſeem generally to have had, and the Elders of the Church alſo, whoſe peculiar office it was to pray over the ſick, and to anoint them with Oyl; and upon their Prayers, God was pleaſed to grant miraculous recoveries, as we find expreſly promiſed,

Sermon XII.

ſed, *James* 5. 14, 15. *Is any ſick among you? let him call for the Elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith ſhall ſave the ſick, and the Lord ſhall raiſe him up.*

This miraculous Power we find likewiſe mentioned to be conferred on the Apoſtles in our Saviour's life-time, when he firſt gave them Commiſſion to Preach the Goſpel to the *Jews*, *Mark* 6. 12, 13. where it is ſaid, that *They went out, and preached that men ſhould repent. And they caſt out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were ſick, and healed them.*

And now that this miraculous Gift is ceaſed, there is no reaſon why the meer Ceremony of *anointing with oil* ſhould continue; which yet is ſtill uſed in the Church of *Rome*, and made a *Sacrament*; tho' it ſignifie nothing: for they do not pretend to heal men by it; nay they pretend the contrary, becauſe they never uſe it, but in ex-

Volume XII.

tremity, and where they look upon the perſon as paſt recovery; and if they did not think ſo, they would not uſe it.

But beſides the healing, with this ſolemnity of anointing with Oil and with Prayer, which ſeems to have been uſed by the Elders of the Church, only upon thoſe who were members of the Church, there was likewiſe a general Gift of healing, which the Apoſtles exerciſed upon all occaſions where ever they came; and this was performed only by laying their hands on the ſick. And this we find promiſed by our Saviour to his Apoſtles, when he gave them Commiſſion to Preach the Goſpel to all the World, immediately before his Aſcenſion; and not only to the Apoſtles, but to thoſe who ſhould believe upon their preaching, *Mark* 16. 17, 18. *Theſe ſigns ſhall follow them that believe: in my name ſhall they caſt out devils*, &c. And then it follows, *they ſhall lay hands on the ſick, and they ſhall recover.*

Fourthly,

Sermon XII.

Fourthly, The Power of raiſing the dead, which hath always been eſteemed one of the greateſt and moſt unqueſtionable Miracles of all other. A principal part of the Apoſtles Office was *to be witneſſes of our Saviour's Reſurrection from the dead*, whereby he was ſo *powerfully demonſtrated to be the Son of God.* But becauſe this was a ſtrange Relation, and not eaſie to be credited, by thoſe who were ſtrangers to the Apoſtles, and had never known them before; therefore that they might witneſs this with more Authority, God was pleaſed to endow them with a miraculous Power of all kinds; and particularly with a power of raiſing the dead: and then there was no difficulty in receiving their teſtimony concerning our Saviour's Reſurrection, when men ſaw them in his name raiſe others from the dead. And of this we have two inſtances in the *Acts* of the Apoſtles; of St. *Peter*'s raiſing *Dorcas*, *Acts* 9. and St. *Paul*'s raiſing *Eutychus*, *Acts* 20. And *Ireneus*, who lived in the Age after the Apoſtle's tells us, that

Volume XII.

in his time this power continued among Chriſtians.

Fifthly, Another miraculous Gift was that of diſcerning Spirits; the principal uſe of which was, to try and judge who were true Prophets. And of this the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 *Cor.* 14. 29. *Let the prophets ſpeak two or three, and let the other judge.* And, *ver.* 32. *The ſpirits of the prophets are ſubject to the prophets.* And this is likewiſe call'd by the ſame Apoſtle, *the gift of diſcerning ſpirits.* 1 Cor. 12. 10. *To another is given the diſcerning of ſpirits.* Thoſe who pretended to this Gift, were tryed by the Biſhops and Elders of the Church, as the Prophets were tryed among the *Jews*, by the *Sanhedrim.* And of theſe kind of Aſſemblies among the Chriſtians, for the tryal of Prophets, *Euſebius* ſpeaks particularly in his 5*th.* Book.

And it ſhould ſeem likewiſe that this gift of diſcerning Spirits, extended alſo to the diſcovery of the ſecrets of mens hearts; by the revealing whereof,

whereof unbelievers were many times ſuddenly ſtruck and convinced; as may very probably be collected from 1 *Cor.* 14. 24, 25. *But if all propheſie, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned; he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. And thus are the ſecrets of his heart made manifeſt, and ſo falling down on his face, he will worſhip God, and report that God is in you of a truth.* Sermon XII.

And upon this miraculous Gift of knowing the ſecrets of mens hearts, it ſeems to be very probable, that that which is commonly call'd *the power of the Keys* did depend, I mean *the power of remitting or retaining ſins:* for they who had the priviledge of knowing mens hearts, might do this upon certain grounds, and were ſecured from miſtake in the exerciſe of their power upon particular Perſons; which the Prieſts and Miniſters of the Church now are not, nor can be; becauſe they cannot not ſee into mens hearts, whether they be truly penitent and qualified for forgiveneſs or not. For I cannot eaſily believe but

Volume XII.

that thoſe words of our Saviour, *whoſe ſins ye remit, they are remitted*; *and whoſe ſins ye retain, they are retained*, were intended to ſignifie ſomething more than a meer declaration of the Promiſes and Threatnings of the Goſpel, which any Man might make, as well as the Apoſtles and Miniſters of the Church. For that God will forgive the penitent, and that he will not pardon the ſinner, except he repent, is as true from any Man's mouth, as from an Apoſtles: and as to the abſolution of this or that particular Perſon, tho' a Miniſter by the skill and knowledge of his Profeſſion, is ordinarily and reaſonably preſumed by virtue of his office, to be a better judge of a Man's Repentance, than other perſons are, and therefore may with more Authority and Satisfaction to the penitent, declare his judgment and opinion concerning him; yet not being able to ſee into his heart, he may be miſtaken concerning him; and if he be, his declaring his ſins to be forgiven, that is, his abſolution of him, will do him no good: and on the other hand, his refuſal to abſolve him, if he be truly penitent, will do him

him no harm. As the judgment of a skilful Lawyer is of greater Authority, and more ſatisfactory to us concerning our title to an Eſtate, than the opinion of another Man, who is not of the Profeſſion, nor preſumed to have the like skill: but yet for all this, his judgment does not alter the caſe; and if in truth the Law be otherwiſe, our title is bad, for all this skilfull Man's opinion of the goodneſs of it. Sermon XII.

And thus much is granted by the Church of *Rome*; that if the Prieſt be miſtaken in the uſe of the Keys, and gives abſolution to one that is not truly Penitent, his ſins are not remitted; or if a perſon be excommunicated that is not truly guilty, his ſins are not retained; what *he binds on earth, is* not *bound in heaven*; *and he whom he looſeth and abſolves on earth, is* not *abſolved in heaven.* But the Proteſtants go farther, and do not only make a miſtaken Abſolution or Excommunication void in it ſelf; but they do not make the Abſolution of the Prieſt at all neceſſary to the forgiveneſs of ſins, but only convenient for

Volume XII.

the ſatisfaction and comfort of the Penitent. For which reaſon, our Church does not require a formal Abſolution to be given to the dying penitent, unleſs he himſelf deſire it; which is a certain Argument, that in the Judgment of our Church, the Abſolution of the Prieſt is not neceſſary to the Forgiveneſs and Salvation of the Penitent. For had they thought it neceſſary, they would have enjoyned the Prieſt to give it to every one whom he judged Penitent, whether he deſired it or not.

So that the Abſolution of the Prieſt, having only the Authority of a Man, preſumed to be skillful in his office, but no certain Effect, in caſe he be miſtaken (as he very eaſily may be, and if he be, as he ought to be, a Charitable Man, no doubt often is) I cannot think but that this Power of *remitting and retaining ſins*, ſo ſolemnly conferr'd on the Apoſtles by our Saviour, had ſomething in it that was miraculous and extraordinary, and did ſuppoſe the knowledge of mens hearts, and that they were

were not miſtaken in the application of this Power to particular Perſons; and conſequently, that in that miraculous and extraordinary degree, it was peculiar to the Apoſtles and their times. For I cannot eaſily be brought to believe, that the meaning of this great Promiſe to the Apoſtles ſhould be only this, *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, whatſoever ye ſhall bind on earth*, if ye be not miſtaken, as in many caſes ye will be, and in any caſe ye may be, *ſhall be bound in heaven: and whatſoever ye ſhall looſe on earth, ſhall be looſed in heaven.* And if more be meant than this, it muſt ſuppoſe a miraculous Power of diſcerning the ſincerity of mens hearts. Sermon XII.

And therefore when the Power of the Keys is conferred on the Miniſters of the Goſpel, in our Form of Ordination, I ſuppoſe that only one or both of theſe *two* things is intended by it, *viz.* a Power to admit Perſons into the Chriſtian Church by Baptiſm, in which is ſealed to them the remiſſion of ſins; and

to

Volume XII.

to caſt perſons out of the Communion of the Chriſtian Church, by Excommunication and the Cenſures of it: and an authority, by virtue of their office, to declare to men the terms of pardon and forgiveneſs, which cannot be that infallible Power of Abſolving which the Apoſtles had.

And I am the rather induced to think ſo, becauſe I find it promiſed to the Apoſtles, together with the miraculous Power and Efficacy of Prayer, which St. *Chryſoſtom* reckons among the miraculous gifts, which he ſays were ceaſed in his time. That it was thus promiſed, you may ſee *Matth.* 18. 18, 19. *Verily I ſay unto you, whatſoever ye ſhall bind on earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven: and whatſoever ye ſhall looſe on earth, ſhall be looſed in heaven. Again I ſay unto you, that if two of you ſhall agree on earth as touching any thing that they ſhall ask, it ſhall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.* But ſurely no man will pretend, that any two Chriſtians or Miniſters have now this Power, that whatever they ſhall agree together to

to ask of God, which is fit and lawful in behalf of any perſon, God will certainly grant it upon their requeſt. In the ſame ſenſe I underſtand ſeveral other Texts, concerning the Efficacy of the Prayers of the Apoſtles and firſt Chriſtians, as in a great meaſure miraculous, and peculiar to the firſt times of Chriſtianity. And I think any man that attentively conſiders them, will think that they cannot well be underſtood otherwiſe. Such as theſe, *Matth.* 21. 22. *And all things whatſoever ye ſhall ask in prayer, believing, ye ſhall receive.* Mark. 11. 24. *I ſay unto you, what things ſoever ye deſire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye ſhall have them.* John 14. 14. *If ye ſhall ask any thing in my Name, I will do it*; and Chap. 15. 17. *If ye abide in me, and my Words abide in you, ye ſhall ask what ye will, and it ſhall be done unto you.* 1 Joh. 3. 22. *And whatſoever we ask, we receive of him*; and Chap. 5. 14, 15. *And this is the confidence which we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know that he hear us, whatſoever we ask,* Sermon XII.

we

Volume XII.

we know that we have the petitions that we deſired of him. Theſe Promiſes I take to contain ſomething extraordinary, and peculiar to the firſt times of Chriſtianity. And this will appear exceeding probable, if we conſider the occaſion and circumſtances of theſe Promiſes, which are ſo often joyned with the Promiſe of a miraculous Power, as in the place I mentioned before, *Matth* 18. 18, 19. where after the Power of *binding and looſing*, it immediately follows, that *if two of you ſhall agree on earth touching any thing they ſhall ask, it ſhall be done for them of my Father, which is in heaven.* Matth. 21. 22. *and* Mark 11. 24. ſays our Saviour there to his Diſciples; *Have Faith in God: for verily I ſay unto you, whoſoever ſhall ſay to this mountain; be thou removed, and be thou caſt into the ſea, and ſhall not doubt in his heart, but ſhall believe that thoſe things which he ſaith ſhall come to paſs, he ſhall have whatſoever he ſaith.* And then immediately it follows, *Therefore I ſay unto you; whatſoever things ye deſire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye ſhall have them*; that is, what-

whatever ye desire of God to do, he shall miraculously do it, upon your Prayers. So likewise *John* 14.12,13,14. *Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father; And whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my Name, I will do it.* Still you see this extraordinary Efficacy of Prayer is joyned with the Power of Miracles, as one part and branch of it. More particularly, we find the forgiveness of the sins of those whom they prayed for, expressly promised. 1 *John* 5. 15. *And if we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.* And then it follows; *If any man see his brother sin a sin, which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for the sin that is not unto death.* Where forgiveness of sins, upon the Prayers of Christians for one another, is promised, except in the case of *a sin unto death*, by which is meant Apostacy from Christianity

Sermon XII.

to

Volume XII.

to the Heathen Idolatry, which is the reaſon of the caution which follows; *Little children, keep your ſelves from Idols.* And this extraordinary efficacy of Prayer, we find promiſed in a more eſpecial manner to the Elders of the Church, *James* 5. 14, 15. *Is any ſick among you? let him call for the Elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith ſhall ſave the ſick, and the Lord ſhall raiſe him up: and if he have committed ſins, they ſhall be forgiven him.*

In comparing of all theſe Texts, it ſeems plain, that both the Power of *remitting* and *retaining ſins*, and the ſtrange efficacy of Prayer, which were promiſed to the Apoſtles and firſt Chriſtians, had ſomething miraculous and extraordinary in them, and were peculiar to the firſt Ages of the Church. I will not be peremptory in theſe things; but this ſeems to be the moſt genuine and reaſonable interpretation of theſe Texts.

Sixthly,

Sermon XII.

Sixthly, And beſides theſe which I have mentioned, there was likewiſe a Power of inflicting Corporal Puniſhments and Diſeaſes upon ſcandalous and obſtinate Chriſtians; which is in Scripture call'd, *a delivering men up to Satan, for the deſtroying* or *tormenting of their bodies, that their ſouls might be ſaved at laſt.* And of this kind were thoſe Diſeaſes which befell the *Corinthians*, for their diſorderly and irregular carriage at the Sacrament, of which the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 *Cor.* 11. 30. *For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep*; that is, to ſome of them theſe Diſtempers proved mortal. And we find that this Power did in ſome caſes extend to the inflicting of ſudden and preſent death; as in the caſe of *Ananias* and *Sapphira.* And indeed conſidering that Chriſtianity was at firſt deſtitute of any countenance from the Civil Power, ſome ſuch Power as this was neceſſary, to maintain the Authority of the Apoſtles againſt the

Volume XII.

the Contumacious and Diſobedient.

And then, *laſtly*, there was the Power of caſting out Devils in the name of Chriſt, which was common to the meaneſt Chriſtian, and continued in the Church a long time after moſt of the other Gifts were ceaſed, as *Tertullian*, *Minucius Felix*, and *Arnobius*, do moſt expreſly teſtifie concerning their times.

Thus you ſee that there were almoſt all imaginable kinds of miraculous Powers conferred upon the Apoſtles and firſt Chriſtians, to give the greater Eſtabliſhment and Confirmation to the Chriſtian Doctrine.

All the reflection I ſhall make upon what hath been ſaid, ſhall be this. Since our Religion comes down to us confirmed by ſuch miraculous Powers, *we ought to take the more earneſt heed to it*, to believe it

it more ſtedfaſtly, and to practice it more carefully in our lives. *For if the word ſpoken by Angels was ſtedfaſt, and every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience received a juſt recompence of reward; How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation?*

Sermon XII.

SERMON XIII.

Of the Miracles wrought in Confirmation of Chriſtianity.

The Third Sermon on this Text.

HEB. II. 4.

God alſo bearing them witneſs, both with ſigns and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the holy Ghoſt, according to his own will.

IN theſe words *three* things offer themſelves to our conſideration.

Firſt, That Miracles are a Divine Teſtimony given to a Perſon or Doctrine.

Secondly, That God gave this Teſtimony to the Apoſtles and firſt Publiſhers

Volume XII.

liſhers of the Goſpel, in a very eminent manner. Of theſe *two* I have diſcours'd at large, and now proceed to the,

Third, and *laſt* thing which I propoſed, *viz.* The reaſon why theſe Miracles are now ceaſed in the Chriſtian Church, and have been for a long time, ſo that there have been no footſteps of this miraculous Power for many Ages. And in the handling of this Argument, I ſhall do theſe *three* things.

I. ſhew that theſe miraculous Gifts and Powers have ceaſed in the Chriſtian Church for ſeveral Ages.

II. I ſhall aſſign a plain Reaſon of the ceaſing of Miracles after ſuch a time.

III. Anſwer the Objection from the innumerable Miracles which have been, and are ſtill pretended to be wrought in the Church of *Rome*.

I. I

Sermon XIII.

I. I ſhall ſhew, that theſe miraculous Powers and Gifts have ceaſed in the Church for ſeveral Ages. That they are now ceaſed we find by certain experience; nor are they pretended to at this day, by any part of the Chriſtian Church, except the Church of *Rome*, where yet they are nothing ſo plentiful now a-days, as they were in thoſe ignorant Ages, from the time of the degeneracy and corruption of the Weſtern Church, down to the Reformation; and now chiefly pretended to in thoſe parts of the *Roman* Communion, where their Religion reigns without any contradiction, and people are under the awe and laſh of the *Inquiſition*, ſo that they dare neither gainſay, nor offer to detect the forgery and impoſture of them; and yet here is leſs need of them, becauſe the people are all of a mind, and believe as the Church would have them, and dare not for their lives do otherwiſe. For where the *Inquiſition* rules, and ignorance, the Mother, not of true Devotion, but of Credulity and Superſtition, is carefully preſerved,

Volume XII.

there is no need of Miracles, to make people believe what they have a mind to: but in other places, where their Religion is oppoſed, and there is great occaſion for them, both to confirm thoſe of their own Religion, and to reduce Hereticks and Unbelievers, there is little or no pretence, to them, as I ſhall ſhew by and by.

So that all over the Chriſtian Church, except in the Church of *Rome*, all pretence to theſe miraculous Powers and Gifts is now ceaſed, and hath been for many Ages. St. *Chryſoſtom* ſpeaking of his time, which was about 400 years after Chriſt, ſays that theſe miraculous Powers were then ceaſed and ſpeaks as if no footſteps of them were left in the Paſtors and Governours of the Church, much leſs among private Chriſtians; for which he gives this ſubſtantial reaſon (which I ſhall ſpeak to afterwards) that Chriſtianity being now already eſtabliſh'd by Miracles, there was no reaſon to expect the continuance of them. St. *Auguſtine* indeed, ſometime after, ſpeaks of many miraculous things done at Sepulchres

Sepulchres of the Martyrs. But this doth not contradict what St. *Chryſoſtom* had ſaid, becauſe he ſpeaks of the living Teachers and Members of the Church, in whom theſe miraculous Gifts and Powers were ceaſed: but that ſome miraculous Cures were wrought upon the Prayers of Chriſtians, at the Tombs of the Martyrs, is a confirmation of the thing, that God deſigned to honour the Primitive Chriſtians and Martyrs with theſe Gifts, and not to continue them to the ſucceeding Ages of the Church; and therefore God was pleaſed that ſo many wonderful things ſhould be done at their Sepulchres, to ſhew that he did intend, that theſe miraculous Powers and Gifts ſhould dye with them, and continue no longer in the living members of the Church. Sermon XIII.

II. I ſhall now aſſign a plain reaſon of the ceaſing of theſe miraculous Gifts after ſuch a time; namely, becauſe there was not the like neceſſity and occaſion for them, that there was before. They were at firſt in a great degree neceſſary to introduce the Go-

Volume XII.

ſpel into the World, which was deſtitute of all other helps and advantages; to recommend it to the eſteem and liking of Mankind; to give credit to a new Doctrine and Religion, ſo contrary to the inveterate prejudices of men, bred up in another Religion very different from this, and ſo oppoſite to the luſts and intereſts of men; to make way for the more ſpeedy and effectual planting of this Religion in the World; to ſtrengthen the hands of the firſt Publiſhers of it, and to give credit to their Teſtimony, concerning that ſtrange relation of theirs, of the Reſurrection of Chriſt from the dead; to be a ſenſible evidence and conviction to men, of the Divinity of that new Doctrine which was preached to them, and to ſupport and confirm them in the Belief and Profeſſion of it, againſt thoſe terrible Sufferings and Perſecutions, which for the ſake of it they were expoſed to. For theſe reaſons God was pleaſed to ſhed abroad ſo plentifully theſe miraculous Gifts, among the firſt Preachers and Profeſſors of Chriſtianity; and as theſe reaſons ceaſed or abated, ſo did theſe mira-

miraculous Powers and Gifts: and therefore as ſoon as the Goſpel was planted, which it was in a great part of the then known World, during the life of the Apoſtles, the Gift of Tongues ceaſed, and we hear no more of it, becauſe there was no farther uſe and occaſion for it. Other Gifts did continue longer, but abated by degrees, according as Chriſtianity gained ground and eſtabliſhment, and they grew leſs frequent, as there was leſs need of them. The Power of caſting out Devils, which was moſt common (for every Chriſtian had it) continued longeſt; and there was reaſon it ſhould continue ſo long as the Devil reigned, and the Pagan Idolatry was kept up, to ſhew that the Spirit of Chriſt was ſuperiour to the Devil, and would finally overcome him and overthrow his Kingdom, according to that of St. *John*, 1 *John* 4. 4. *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: becauſe greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.* And this appeared in that they were able in the Name of Chriſt to caſt him out whereever he had taken poſſeſſion, which

Sermon XIII.

God

Volume XII.

God permitted to be very frequent in thoſe times, for the more glorious manifeſtation of his Power, in *caſting out the Prince of this world.* But when the Powers of the World became Chriſtian, and the heathen Idolatry was every where overthrown, and Satan's Kingdom every where deſtroyed, then this miraculous Gift alſo ceaſed, there being no farther occaſion for it. And now that *the kingdoms of the world* were *become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Chriſt*, and that the Goſpel was planted, and had taken firm root, and was fully ſettled and eſtabliſh'd, theſe miraculous Powers, which were at firſt neceſſary to ballance the mighty difficulties and oppoſitions which Chriſtianity met withal, and to ſupply the want of all manner of countenance from the Civil Authority, were withdrawn, and did ceaſe, becauſe there was no need of their longer continuance.

Beſides that it is to be conſidered, that thoſe miraculous Powers which manifeſted themſelves in the firſt A-

ges

ges of Chriſtianity, were intended by God to give a ſtanding confirmation to it in after Ages; as the Miracles that were wrought at the giving of the Law, and the bringing of the Children of *Iſrael* into *Canaan*, were deſigned for a ſtanding confirmation of the *Jewiſh* Religion, the memory whereof was ſo carefully preſerved and tranſmitted to after Ages, that they needed not to be repeated. Sermon XIII.

I come now in the,

III. and *laſt* Place to anſwer that Objection from the innumerable Miracles which have been, and are ſtill pretended to be wrought in the Church of *Rome*. And ſo indeed we find that the *Arians* and other Hereticks in former times pretended to Miracles, for the confirmation of their Errors a good while after Miracles were generally ceaſed in the Chriſtian Church, which ſhews that this is no new or ſtrange thing.

In anſwer to this Objection, I deſire

Volume XII.

ſire theſe following particulars may be conſidered.

Firſt, That the moſt Learned and Judicious Writers of the *Roman* Church do acknowledge, that there it no neceſſity of Miracles now, and that Chriſtianity is ſufficiently eſtabliſh'd by the Miracles which were wrought at firſt to give Teſtimony to it; and therefore not being neceſſary, without manifeſt evidence of fact, it is not neceſſary to believe that they are continued.

Secondly, The Miracles pretended to by the Church of *Rome* are of very doubtful and ſuſpected credit, even among the wiſeſt Perſons of their own Communion; and therefore I hope they do not expect we ſhould give much credit to thoſe Miracles, of the truth of which they themſelves are in ſo much doubt, that they are generally looked upon by the more Prudent and Learned among them, as pious frauds, to raiſe and entertain the Devotion of the weak and ignorant. Several of them have been convicted

victed of fraud and impoſture, not only here in *England*, in times of Popery, and at the beginning of the Reformation; but in other Countries, where that Religion bears ſway. Sermon XIII.

And it is obſervable, that the greateſt part of the Hiſtory of theſe Miracles (which they call *Legends*) were Written in the *Romance* Age, and much in the ſame ſtyle, with the like wantonneſs and extravagancy of fancy, and ſulſom abſurdity of invention, and it is to be feared with the like regard to Truth. And I know not whether *Romances* had not their name, as well as their original, from theſe *Roman Legends*, of which they are exact Copies and Imitations; and as theſe were *Sacred*, ſo thoſe were a ſort of *Civil Legends*, in which they repreſented their *Hero's* doing the like abſurd Feats and Miracles in *Chivalry*, as their Saints in their *Legends* are ſaid to do in *Religion*; and they were both Written by the lazy and unlearned Monks, and by them dreſt up and fitted to the guſt of thoſe ignorant and ſuperſtitious Ages.

And

Volume XII.

And yet these *Legends* of *lying wonders* have not only been put into the hands of the people, but Lessons out of them have been taken, as out of the Scriptures, and distributed into the publick Offices of their Church, to be read there, as the Scriptures are, and instead of them; only with this difference, that the people are permitted to have the Scriptures only in an unknown Tongue, but the *Legends*, out of which these Lessons are taken, they are permitted to have at home in their own Tongue; as if there were no danger of Error or Heresie from false stories, but only from the word of Truth. And herein is remarkably fulfill'd that Propheſie concerning the followers of Antichrist, 2 *Thess.* 2. 11. That *because they received not the truth in the love of it, God would send them strong delusions,* ἐνέργειαν πλάνης, *the efficacy of imposture, that they should believe a lie.* And how could they more solemnly declare the belief and love of lies, than by putting these ridiculous Fables into the publick Offices of the Church,

Church, in place of the Holy Scriptures? and at the ſame time that they deny to the people the uſe of the Scriptures in a known Tongue, to permit them the uſe, and to recommend to them the Reading of theſe *lying Legends*, out of which theſe ridiculous Leſſons are taken? Sermon XIII.

Thirdly, The Miracles of the Church of *Rome*, ſuppoſing ſeveral of them to be true, have ſuch Marks and Characters upon them, as render it very ſuſpitious that they are not operations of God, or good Spirits; but *the working of Satan.* If any Man have but the patience to rake into theſe Dunghills, and to read over theſe *Legends*, even as they have by the later Collectors and Compilers been purged and reformed, he ſhall find the Miracles recited in them to be generally of one ſtamp, very fooliſh and abſurd, frivolous and trifling, wrought without any neceſſity, upon no good occaſion, to no wiſe end and purpoſe; ſo that one may know them by their very countenance to be the tricks and pranks of the Devil; and not the great

great and glorious works of God, ſuch as are the Miracles recorded in the Holy Scriptures.

Fourthly, The Miracles of the Church of *Rome*, taking them for true, are very impertinently and unſeaſonably wrought. When and where there is no need and occaſion for them, they are very rife and frequent: but where there is greateſt occaſion for them, and moſt reaſon to expect them, they are either not at all, or very rarely ſo much as pretended to In times and places where their Religion did moſt abſolutely bear ſway, and few or none durſt oppoſe it, and where the Doctrines, which they pretend to confirm by theſe Miracles, were moſt generally believed, as in thoſe long dark and ignorant times before the Reformation, and now in *Italy* and *Spain*, where the *Inquiſition* forceth them all to be of one belief, or to profeſs to be ſo, in theſe times and places, where there was leaſt need and occaſion for Miracles, then and there did they moſt abound, even more (if we may believe their Hiſtories) for

for ſeveral Ages before the Reformation, than in the times of our Saviour and his Apoſtles. But ſince the Reformation, and that many of their Doctrines are called in queſtion and disbelieved, Miracles are grown rare, and almoſt ceaſed even in Popiſh Countries; and they have had but very ill ſucceſs with thoſe few they have pretended to; witneſs the Miracle at *Angiers* in *France*, of a Child appearing over the Altar in the time of *Maſs*, to convince all people of the Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*, with which the Papiſts made ſuch a noiſe here in *England* about fourteen or fifteen years ago, and which at laſt was diſcovered to be an artificial juggle and contrivance of ſome cuning Prieſt, and publiſh'd to the World for a cheat, by the honeſt and worthy Biſhop of that place.

But where there ſeems to be moſt need of them, they are moſt wanting; as for the converſion of Heathens; and the conviction of Heretick Infidels. For the Converſion of Heathens, in which caſe, if men did ſincerely de-

Volume XII.

ſign the propagation of the true and uncorrupted Chriſtianity, I do not ſee why Miracles might not yet reaſonably be expected; but yet for all this, we hear of very few Miracles, not ſo much as the Gift of Tongues, even upon this occaſion. In the firſt Planting of the Weſt-*Indies*, we hear of no Miracles, except the moſt prodigious cruelties that ever were in the World, to the infinite ſcandal of the Chriſtian Name. And in the Eaſt-*Indies* and *China*, *Xaverius* and the firſt Miſſionaries ſpeak with no aſſurance of any Miracles wrought by them; and ſince that time they have ſo depraved the Chriſtian Religion there, by concealing a moſt eſſential part of it, the Death and Sufferings of our Saviour, as if they were *aſhamed of the Croſs of Chriſt*, that it is not credible, that God ſhould vouchſafe the countenance of Miracles to thoſe who *preach another Goſpel.*

And then for the conviction of Hereticks (as they are pleaſed to call us *Proteſtants*) one would think Miracles (ſince they have that Power) would

would be very proper for that purpoſe to be wrought among them; as now here in *England*, where they are continually endeavouring (but eſpecially of late with more than uſual vigour and hopes) to reſtore their Religion: and yet for all this we cannot prevail with them to favour us with the ſight of one Miracle, in order to our Conviction; but if they have any, they keep them private among themſelves, tho' both Reaſon and Scripture tell us, *that Miracles were not intended for them that believe; but to convince them that believe not.* Sermon XIII.

Fifthly, He from whom, of all Perſons in that Church, we might expect the moſt and greateſt Miracles, does not, ſo far as I can learn, pretend at all to that Gift, I mean the head of their Church, the Pope, who both as he is *Vicar* of *Chriſt*, and *Succeſſor of St. Peter* in his full Power and Office; or if he be not his *Succeſſor*, yet as he is his *Shadow*, and pretends to be his *Succeſſor*, might fairly pretend to a power of Mira-

Volume XII.

cles above any in that Church; and I have often wonder'd why he does not: but it ſeems he contents himſelf with Infallibility, which is priviledge and power enough for one Man; and indeed if he had it, and could ſatisfie others that he hath it, *that* would ſerve his turn without Miracles: but the miſchief of it is, there is no other external evidence, and which can reaſonably ſatisfie others of any Man's inſpiration or infallibility, but Miracles; and therefore the Pope hath done very unadviſedly, in pretending to one without the other, when he hath the ſame right and title to both, that is, none at all.

Sixthly, Moſt of the Doctrines in difference between us and the Church of *Rome*, which they chiefly pretend to confirm by theſe Miracles, are not capable of being confirmed by them. There are *three* ſorts of Doctrines, *two* of which are in their own Nature incapable of being confirmed by a Miracle, and a *third* upon ſuppoſition of its contrariety to the Chriſtian Doctrine

ctrine, which hath already had an unqueſtionable Divine Confirmation. Sermon XIII.

1. No Doctrine which is contrary to Senſe, is capable of being confirmed by a Miracle, as Tranſubſtantiation; which becauſe it neceſſarily requires the renouncing of our ſenſes, in order to the belief of it, for that very reaſon Miracles can give no credit to it. For that which depends on the certainty of Senſe, as Miracles certainly do, can be no competent Argument to prove that which is contrary to Senſe, as Tranſubſtantiation evidently is.

2. No Doctrine that does countenance or enjoin Idolatry, is capable of being confirmed by a Miracle. This is evident from *Deut.* 13. where *Moſes* ſuppoſeth that a Prophet might work a Sign or a Wonder; but if it was to ſeduce them from the Worſhip of the true God, who is naturally known, to the worſhip of Idols, in that caſe they were not to hearken to him, notwith-

Volume XII.

ſtanding he wrought a Miracle: but the Church of *Rome* teacheth Idolatry in their Worſhip of Images, and of the Hoſt, and in the invocation of Saints and Angels.

3. No Doctrine contrary to any part of the Chriſtian Doctrine, which hath already received an unqueſtionable Divine Confirmation, is capable of being confirmed by the Miracles pretended to in the Church of *Rome*, if they were real. For I hope they have not the face to pretend their Miracles, to be equal to thoſe of our Saviour and his Apoſtles, either for the certainty, or greatneſs of them; and I have already ſhewn, that they notoriouſly want both the credit and certainty of our Saviour's Miracles, and the marks of their Divinity.

Now ſeveral of the Doctrines of that Church are directly contrary to, or inconſiſtent with the Doctrines of Chriſtianity. Their endeavour to conceal from people the Doctrine of the Goſpel, contained in the

the Holy Scriptures, is a notorious contradiction to the deſign of the Goſpel, and to that particular Miracle whereby the knowledge of it was conveyed to the World, the Gift of Tongues; and then the Service of God in an unknown Tongue, which is inconſiſtent with true Devotion, contrary to Edification, and to the plain Scope and Deſign of a whole Chapter of St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians*. And ſo likewiſe is the Communion in one kind, to our Saviour's expreſs Inſtitution: and the repetition of Chriſt's Sacrifice, to as expreſs a declaration of the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* to the contrary, as is poſſible for words to make.

Seventhly and *laſtly*, which falls heavieſt upon them of all, the chief Prophecies of the New Teſtament, which are concerning falſe Prophets, and concerning Antichriſt, have mark'd him out by this Character, that he ſhould be a great worker of Miracles, and magnifie himſelf upon this pretence. *Matth.* 24. 24.

For there ſhall ariſe falſe Chriſts, and falſe prophets, and ſhall ſhew great ſigns and wonders, inſomuch that (if it were poſſible) they ſhall deceive the very elect. And 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 9, 10. St. *Paul* foretels there, that in the great degeneracy and falling away of the Chriſtian Church, *the man of ſin* ſhould *come after the working of Satan, with all power, and ſigns, and wonders of lies*, that is, either falſe Miracles, or Miracles wrought to confirm falſe Doctrines, and *with all deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs*, all the legerdemain and jugling tricks of falſehood and impoſture: and certainly nothing was ever more viſible than theſe are in the Church of *Rome*; whether we conſider their impudent forgeries of Writings; (which they have not the face now to deny) or the Nature and Character of their Miracles. So that tho' *Bellarmine* is pleaſed to make Miracles one of the Marks of the true Church, yet the Miracles of the Church of *Rome*, if we conſider all the Circumſtances of them, are one of the plaineſt marks of Antichriſt, and the very brand

brand of the Beaſt, as we find him deſcribed, *Revel.* 13. 13, 14. *And he doth great wonders, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by the means of thoſe miracles which he had power to do.* Sermon XIII.

And now the Church of *Rome* may be allowed to work Miracles; and yet Divine Miracles, ſuch as were wrought for the firſt Confirmation of Chriſtianity, may be ceaſed in the Church: which is a ſufficient anſwer to the Objection, and upon the whole matter ſhews, that the Miracles pretended to in the Church of *Rome*, are ſo far from giving any confirmation to her Doctrines, that they are rather an evident proof that ſhe is the Apoſtate and Anti-Chriſtian Church.

I might now draw *two* or *three* Inferences from this whole Diſcourſe. As,

I. We have great reaſon to admire the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God in the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel,

Volume XII.

ſpel, that by the ſending down of his holy Spirit to endow the firſt Publiſhers of this Heavenly Doctrine with ſuch Miraculous Gifts and Powers, he hath given ſuch abundant Teſtimony to the Truth of our Religion, and ſuch firm grounds for our Faith to rely upon.

II. The conſideration of what hath been ſaid convinceth men of the great ſin of Infidelity, and the unreaſonableneſs of it, after ſo clear conviction and demonſtration as God hath given to the World of the Truth of Chriſtianity.

III. and *laſtly*, They who believe the Goſpel are utterly inexcuſable, if they do not obey it, and live according to it: for this is the great end of all the Miracles, which God hath wrought for the confirmation of Chriſtianity, that by the belief of the Goſpel men might be brought to *the Obedience of Faith*, and live conformably to the Precepts of that Holy Religion, which the Son of God by ſo many Miracles hath planted

planted and preſerved in the World. But theſe I have * diſcours'd of on another occaſion, and therefore ſhall inſiſt upon them no farther at this time.

Sermon XIII.

* See Vol. 10. Serm. 10.

SER-

SERMON XIV.

The Advantages of Truth, in Oppoſition to Error.

The firſt Sermon on this Text.

1 JOHN IV. 4, 5.

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: becauſe greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore ſpeak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

IN the beginning of this Chapter the Apoſtle cautions Chriſtians againſt the falſe Teachers, and falſe Prophets, intending more eſpecially thoſe of the *Gnoſtick* Sect, as is plain

Volume XII.

plain from the Scope of the whole Epiſtle, who were ſo buſie to ſeduce Chriſtians to their impious ways, and to tempt them to apoſtatize from the Chriſtian Religion to the Heathen Idolatry, for fear of Perſecution.

And to encourage them who had hitherto continued in the Truth, and reſiſted the ſeducing Arts of thoſe falſe Prophets, ſtill to perſevere in their holy Profeſſion and Practice, he tells them what advantages they, who have embraced the Truth, and lived according to it, have above thoſe who ſeduce men to errors, or are ſeduced by them. *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: becauſe greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.* That which gives Truth, and the Profeſſors of it, the advantage over Error and Seducers, is, that Truth is from God, and the Spirit of God dwells in thoſe who ſincerely embrace and obey it.

Sermon XIV.

Ye are of God, that is, Ye are taught by him, and inſtructed in the Doctrine which is from God, and reliſh Divine Truth, which our Saviour calls *ſavouring the things which are of God*, in oppoſition to *the things of the world*, the luſts and intereſts of the World which ſway and rule in thoſe falſe Prophets and ſeducing Spirits. For ſo it follows in the next verſe, *They are of the world*, they are acted by worldly luſts and intereſts: *therefore ſpeak they of the world*, they teach things ſuitable to their worldly affections and intereſts; *and the world heareth them*, they who are of the ſame temper are ſeduced and led away by them.

So that the Apoſtle's deſign in theſe Words, is plainly to ſhew the great advantage which Truth and the ſincere Profeſſors of it have above Error and the Teachers and Diſciples of it

Ye are of God. This phraſe is very frequently, and very peculiarly uſed

Volume XII.

uſed by St. *John*, it ſignifies to belong to God in a ſpecial and peculiar manner, and is the ſame with *being born of God*, and *being the children of God.* Chap. 3. 10. *In this the children of God are manifeſt, and the children of the devil: whoſoever doth not righteouſneſs, is not of God.* Where you ſee *to be of God*, and *to be the children of God*, are the ſame thing: and ſo *to be children of the Devil*, and *to be of the Devil*, are by this Apoſtle uſed in the ſame ſenſe, *Chap.* 3. 8. *He that committeth ſin is of the Devil.* And, *ver.* 12. *Cain who was of that wicked one*, that is, *a child of the Devil*, as he had called ſuch before, *ver.* 10. And becauſe Children do reſemble their Parents in nature and diſpoſition, therefore thoſe who are of a Divine temper and diſpoſition, who reliſh the things of God, and are apt to embrace the Truths of God when they are duly propounded to them, are ready to be taught of God, are ſaid likewiſe *to be of God*, John 8. 47. *He that is of God, heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, becauſe ye are not of God.* So here in the

the Text, *Ye are of God*; ye are of a temper and diſpoſition apt to reliſh Divine things, ready to embrace the Truths of God, and ye have entertained them, and are his Children, and are led by his Spirit, and have the Spirit of God dwelling in you; and this makes you victorious. *Ye have overcome them.* He had ſpoken immediately before of *falſe Prophets* and *Anti-Chriſt*, by which he doth point out not one particular perſon, but the whole number and faction of falſe Teachers, as he tells us, *Chap.* 2. 18. That *now there are many Antichriſts. Ye are of God and have overcome them.* This hath enabled you to reſiſt thoſe ſeducing Spirits, and made you too hard for them, that *ye are of God; becauſe greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.* The force of the reaſonning is this; *Ye are of God*, that is, ye are taught of God, and have received his Doctrine, and are born again by the word of God, and are his Children, and being his Children, ye have his Spirit; and the Spirit of Truth and of God is a ſtronger

Sermon XIV.

Volume XII.

Principle, than that Spirit of Error and Seduction which is in the World, that is, the Devil. *Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.* The Spirit of Truth is more powerful than the Spirit of Error and Seduction; and consequently, they that are of God, who sincerely embrace and obey the Truth, are able to overcome all the Temptations of the World to Apostacy from the Truth.

My work at this time shall be to shew what advantage good men, and those who sincerely embrace and obey the Truth, have to secure them in the ways of Truth and Holiness, against all the Temptations of the Devil and the World. I say in the ways of Truth and Holiness, because there is a strict connexion between a hearty embracing of the Truth of God, and a sincere Obedience to it. And the Apostle speaks of both, in opposition to the *Gnosticks*, who did not only endeavour to seduce men to Apostacy from the Christian Faith, but likewise from the practice of a holy

holy Life. Now to secure men against Temptations to both these, they who *are of God*, who sincerely embrace and obey the Truth, have a great advantage, because that Spirit and Principle which rules and sways in them, is more powerful than that Spirit which rules in the World and in the Children of Disobedience. *Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world*; and that in these *three* respects. Sermon XIV.

First, Divine Truth carries greater evidence along with it.

Secondly, The Motives to perswade men to adhere to Truth and Holiness are more operative and powerful.

Thirdly, There is a greater and more immediate Assistance accompanies the Truth of God, and they who entertain it are acted by a more powerful Principle than that which is in the World.

Volume XII.

First, Divine Truth carries greater Evidence along with it. As will appear, if we conſider theſe *three* things.

I. The Doctrines that are from God have more intrinſick goodneſs in them, and teach ſuch things as are more worthy of God, and more likely to proceed from him.

II. The external Confirmation of theſe Doctrines is greater, and hath more Conviction in it.

III. The Spirit of God doth illuminate the minds of good men, and is concern'd to lead them into the Truth, and to ſecure from dangerous and damnable Errors.

I. The Doctrines which are from God have a more intrinſical goodneſs in them, and teach ſuch things as are more worthy of God, and more likely to proceed from him. Whoever ſuppoſeth God to make a Revelation of himſelf to men, whereby to conduct them to happineſs, muſt in all reaſon

reaſon ſuppoſe ſuch a Divine Doctrine to contain plain Rules and Directions to that End, and powerful Helps, Motives, and Encouragements to enable and excite men to the obſervation of thoſe Rules. For a man would naturally reaſon, That God who is ſo infinitely Good, would in revealing his will to men aim at no other End, but the happineſs of his Creatures; and that he being infinitely Wiſe as well as Good, the Means would be proportionable, and conſequently that the Laws and Precepts which he gives would apparently tend to the Happineſs of Mankind: and becauſe, if men have immortal ſouls, and are deſigned to live for ever, their greateſt Happineſs is that of another world; therefore it is reaſonable to conclude, that thoſe Rules and Directions ſhould principally regard the eternal Happineſs of men in another life, and in ſubſerviency to that, ſhould reſpect likewiſe the temporal Happineſs of men in this World. Sermon XIV

Volume XII.

And ſuch Laws and Rules being ſuppoſed, the next thing to be expected is that God ſhould conſider the the Condition and Circumſtances of Perſons to whom thoſe Laws are given; and if they be averſe to them, that they ſhould be awaken'd and quickned to the obſervance of them, by ſuch Motives and Encouragements as are proper and powerful to that end; and if they be weak and impotent to the performance of what God's Laws require, that they ſhould be enabled and aſſiſted by a proportionable ſtrength.

Now the Doctrine of the Chriſtian Religion, which our bleſſed Saviour reveal'd to the World, and (as we Chriſtians ſay) by Divine Commiſſion and Authority, hath all theſe Marks and Characters of Divinity upon it. The Laws of it are plain and obvious to the common underſtanding of Mankind; all men know what the Precepts of Piety, and Goodneſs, and Mercy, and Righteouſneſs, and Integrity, and Truth, and

and Faithfulneſs, of Meekneſs, and Humility, and Patience, and Forgiveneſs, and Forbearance, and Charity, mean; and ſo I might inſtance in Temperance and Chaſtity and all thoſe other Virtues and Graces which the Chriſtian Religion requires of us, and recommends to us. Theſe all tend to the Advancement and Perfection of our Natures, and make us like to God, and capable of the enjoyment of him in the next life: and beſides this, they do apparently conduce in all reſpects to our temporal Happineſs in this World. And excepting the caſe of Perſecution, (to which God hath promiſed abundant recompence in another World) the Practice of theſe Virtues is evidently to the Advantage of particular Perſons in this World, and to the Peace and Happineſs of Human Society. Sermon XIV.

And becauſe of the great corruption of Human Nature, and the ſtrong inclination of it to Vice, the Goſpel offers proportionable Arguments and Encouragements to men to perſwade them to their duty; an Act of Obli-

Volume XII.

vion and Pardon for what is paſt; perfect Reconciliation to God in and through the Merits and Mediation of our bleſſed Saviour; and the eternal Rewards and Puniſhments of another World; which to men that believe the immortality of their Souls, and are not ſtupidly inſenſible of their intereſt, are the moſt powerful Conſiderations in the World to take men off from ſin, and to bring them to goodneſs.

And becauſe the Corruption of Human Nature hath brought a great weakneſs and impotency upon Mankind, God is pleaſed in the Goſpel to offer to men the powerful aſſiſtance of his Grace and holy Spirit, to enable them to perform all this which he requires of them. And beyond this, what can we expect God ſhould diſcover to men, in order to their Happineſs in this World, or the other? And in all theſe reſpects the Doctrine of the Goſpel, revealed from Heaven by the Son of God, hath to any impartial conſiderer infinitely the advantage of *Paganiſm* or *Mahometiſm*, or any other Doctrine

Doctrine or Inſtitution that ever the World was acquainted withal.

Sermon XIV.

But now if we bring the Doctrines of falſe Prophets and ſeducing Spirits, whom St. *John* calls *Antichriſts*, to this tryal, we ſhall find that they are quite of another ſtamp, deſtitute of goodneſs, and calculated not for the Happineſs and Benefit of men, but for baſe and unworthy ends; whereby it is evident that the teachers of them are *not of God, but of the world*, and *therefore they ſpeak from the world, and the world heareth them.* And of this I will give *two* inſtances; one in thoſe falſe Teachers the *Gnoſticks*, intended by the Apoſtle in this Epiſtle; and the other in a ſort of Seducers nearer to us in our own times.

As for the *Gnoſticks*, beſides their contradicting and virtual renouncing the main Principles of Chriſtianity, by denying that Chriſt was really come in the fleſh, or that he really dyed, or roſe, affirming all this to be only in appearance; the ſumm of their Doctrine

Volume XII.

Doctrine was either a heap of unintelligible words and phraſes, under a pretence of high Myſtery; or a Doctrine of Liberty, as to all manner of vice and wickedneſs, under a pretence of Perfection, and that whatever they did they could not ſin; both which at the firſt ſight are as plain evidence as any reaſonable Man can deſire, that ſuch a Doctrine could not be from God; nothing being more unlikely to be a Divine Revelation, than ſuch abſurd and confuſed ſtuff as no Man can underſtand, and which hath no tendency to make men better. But above all, nothing can be more unworthy of God, nor more unlikely to proceed from him, than ſuch a Doctrine as gives encouragement to vice and wickedneſs of life, under what pretence ſoever it be. For what can be more contrary to God, and a great affront to the Reaſon of Mankind, then to let men looſe to do the vileſt and lewdeſt things, under pretence of Perfection in Goodneſs.

The other inſtance I intend, is nearer at hand, and concerns us more and

and that is in the Church of *Rome*, and thoſe falſe Teachers which ſhe ſends abroad into the World, and which at this day ſwarm among us; and never did any Character more unluckily agree to any ſort of men, than this of the Apoſtle does to that Church and the Teachers of it, that *they are of the world, and therefore they ſpeak of the world, and the world heareth them.* Sermon XIV.

In which words there are *three* remarkable Characters given of falſe Prophets and Teachers.

1. That they are acted by a worldly Spirit, and carry on a ſecular Intereſt and Deſign, *they are of the world.*

2. That they teach things ſuitable to their worldly Intereſt and Deſign, and therefore they ſpeak ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου, *from the world*, according to that worldly Spirit that acts them and rules in them.

3. Thoſe

Volume XII.

3. Thoſe that hearken to them are a ſort of people like themſelves, of worldly Affections and Intereſts, *the world heareth them.*

1. They are acted by a worldly Spirit, and carry on a ſecular Intereſt and Deſign, of Greatneſs and Ambition, of Dominion and Tyranny, of Riches and Wealth. Any Man that conſiders the Church of *Rome* at this day, and by what ſteps and degrees, by what worldly ways and unworthy means ſhe hath attained to that Power and Wealth and Greatneſs, to that Dominion and Tyranny, which now for ſeveral hundred of years ſhe hath exerciſed, not only over the Conſciences of men in the moſt cruel manner, but even over temporal Princes and States, in commanding their Treaſures and Armies, in depoſing Kings, and diſpoſing of their Kingdoms, and in all immaginable inſtances of ſecular Dominion and Tyranny, cannot but be ſatisfied by what Spirit they are acted, and that they as viſibly carry on a worldly Intereſt and

and Deſign, as the moſt ambitious Secular Prince ever did.

2. They teach things ſuitable to their worldly Deſigns and Intereſts. Let but any Man impartially ſurvey thoſe which are the proper Doctrines of the *Romiſh* Church, and which we challenge for innovation and corruption of the truly ancient Catholick and Chriſtian Doctrine, and it will at firſt ſight be evident to him, whither theſe Doctrines tend, and that they do not ſerve the Ends of Religion, but of worldly Greatneſs and Dominion. What greater inſtance of Ambition, than the claim of the univerſal Supremacy of the Biſhop of *Rome* over all Chriſtians and Churches in the World, without the leaſt ground, or indeed colour of ground either from Scripture or Antiquity; and not only of an univerſal Spiritual Power over Chriſtians, but of an indirect temporal Power over Princes in order to ſpiritual Ends, which may be extended to any thing, and hath been upon occaſion to the Donation of Kingdoms, and the depoſing of Princes, and the transferring

Volume XII.

of Temporal Dominion from lawful and Hereditary Princes, to thoſe who had no manner of Right or Title? What more arrogant and directly tending to the enſlaving of Mankind, than their pretence to Infallibility, which yet they could never agree among themſelves where to place? What greater tyranny can be exerciſed over Mankind, than to oblige them to an implicit Faith, and blind Obedience, to believe what the Church believes, tho' they do not know what it is; and to do what the Church commands, tho' they doubt never ſo much of the lawfulneſs of it? Than to hide the word of God from them, and to lock it up in an uknown Tongue, and to deter them from the free uſe of that which was deſigned by God to be the great inſtrument of the Salvation of Mankind? than not to let men exerciſe their Underſtandings in the Service of God; nor when they joyn in publick Prayers, to ſuffer them to know what it is they ask of God; as if *the Prieſt's lips* were ſo *to preſerve knowledge*, as to keep it all to themſelves, and not

to

to make uſe of it for the Benefit and Edification of the people? And laſtly, to impoſe upon men, under pain of damnation, the belief of Doctrines, not only contrary to the true Senſe of Scripture, but to all the Senſe and Reaſon of Mankind, as is the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation? How is it poſſible to bring people into a greater ſubjection to the Prieſts, and dependance upon them, than by Auricular Confeſſion, and that unreaſonable Doctrine of making the Efficacy of the Sacraments to depend upon the Intention of the Prieſt; and conſequently to put into the Power of a malicious and bad Man to damn all his Pariſh? And to mention but one thing more, what better contrivance could be thought of to enrich the Church, and drain the Purſes of the People, than their Doctrines of Purgatory, and Prayers for the dead, of Indulgences and Satisfaction, and their Farm of ſins and vices of all kinds, call'd *the Tax of the Apoſtolick Chamber*? Can any Man think that theſe and ſuch like Doctrines are *of God*, which do ſo directly ſerve the Ends

of

Volume XII.

of Covetouſneſs and Ambition? Any one that does not wilfully ſhut his Eyes, may plainly ſee that ſuch Doctrines, and ſuch Teachers, are *of the world*, and that they *ſpeak* and *teach* theſe things out of a *worldly* Intereſt and Deſign.

And here I might take notice likewiſe, that *they ſpeak from the world* alſo in another ſenſe, by ſhewing what worldly and indirect Means (not to ſay wicked and ſinful Arts) they commonly make uſe of to make Diſciples and gain Proſelytes, by Flattery and Falſhood, by concealing and miſrepreſenting their own Doctrines and Practices, by defaming their Adverſaries with known Fictions and Calumnies, tempting men from their Religion by Promiſes of temporal Advantages, which, when they have gained them, they do not always perform and make good. Can any thing be more oppoſite to the genius of true Religion, than to promote it by Means ſo plainly contrary to the very Nature and Deſign of it?

3. Thoſe

3. Thoſe who hearken to them, and are ſeduced by them, are generally like themſelves, *they ſpeak from the world, and the world heareth them.* Not but that men of very honeſt and ſincere minds may be ſeduced into great Errors, through prejudice, or weakneſs, or a melancholy ſuperſtition: but generally ſuch a Religion as is calculated for the promoting of Secular Intereſt, and is carried on by Secular Arts, does gain upon carnal and wordly minds, and it is uſually ſome worldly conſideration or other that prevails with men to embrace and profeſs it. A Religion that can find out ways to ſave men without ſincere repentance and a good life, is very fit to make Proſelytes in the world; they that teach ſuch Doctrines *ſpeak from the world*, and *the world* is very apt *to hear them.*

And thus I have done with the *firſt* thing, whereby it appears that Divine Truth carries great Evidence along with it, namely, that the

Volume XII.

Doctrines which are from God have more intrinsical goodness in them, and teach such things as are more worthy of God, and more likely to proceed from him. I will be briefer in the rest.

II. The external Confirmation of Divine Doctrines is greater, and carries more conviction along with it. By external Confirmation, I mean chiefly that of Miracles. And tho' the Pagan Religion pretended to some, and our Saviour plainly foretold that *Antichrists* and *false Prophets should arise*, and should *shew signs and wonders*, and St. *Paul* hath told us, that *the man of sin* should *come with signs and wonders and mighty power*; yet none of these are of any great consideration, in comparison of the many, and great, and unquestionable Miracles which were so universally wrought for the establishment of the Christian Religion, and continued for some Ages; they bear no manner of proportion to them, neither for the nature, nor number, nor circumstances of them, so as to shake

ſhake or weaken any mans belief of the Chriſtian Religion, which had ſo much a greater Confirmation given to it; eſpecially when our Saviour did foretel that falſe Prophets ſhould do ſome things of this kind. For after a Religion is eſtabliſht by plain and unqueſtionable Miracles, ſuch as for their number, nature, publickneſs, and continuance, and all imaginable circumſtances of advantage, were never upon any occaſion wrought in the world, I ſay after this, it is not reaſonable, that one or two ſingle Miracles or Wonders pretended to, or really wrought by a falſe Prophet, ſhould bring in queſtion the truth of a Religion confirmed by a long ſeries of the greateſt and moſt unqueſtionable Miracles.

Beſides that the Doctrine of it is ſuch as is worthy of God, and moſt likely to proceed from him. *

* *See of this more at large in the 3 laſt foregoing Sermons.*

As for the Miracles pretended to by the Church of *Rome*, they are generally ſo fantaſtical and ridiculous,

Volume XII.

lous, and ſo unlike the works of God, and wrought ſo to no end and purpoſe, not among Unbelievers for their Conviction, which was always the great End of Miracles, but among themſelves; and ſo deſtitute of credit, that the wiſeſt among themſelves are ſo far from believing them, that they are heartily aſhamed of them, ſo that we need not trouble our ſelves about them, for they are not like to give any great Confirmation to any Doctrine, which ſtand ſo much in need of Confirmation themſelves.

III. Beſides the Goodneſs of the Doctrines which are from God, and the external Confirmation of them by Miracles, which is a great advantage to the reception of them, the Spirit of God doth likewiſe illuminate good men, and thoſe who are deſirous to know the truth, and hath promiſed to lead them into it, and to aſſiſt them in diſcerning between truth and falſehood. So our Saviour hath aſſur'd

aſſur'd us, *John* 7. 17. *If any man will do his will, he ſhall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of my ſelf.* Beſides that the Doctrines which are from God do commonly carry the Marks and Characters of their own Divinity upon them, the Providence of God is likewiſe particularly concerned, that good men, and thoſe who are of honeſt minds, and ſincerely deſirous to know the truth, ſhould not be deceived in matters of ſo great conſequence to the happineſs and ſalvation of Mankind. To the ſame purpoſe is that Promiſe, *John* 14. 21. *He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me, ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him; and will manifeſt my ſelf to him;* God is always ready to reveal his Will to thoſe who are ſincerely deſirous to do it, and will not ſuffer men of honeſt minds to err dangerouſly in matters wherein their eternal Salvation is concern'd. Sermon XIV.

Thus you ſee what Advantage the Spirit of Truth hath above the Spirit of Error and Seduction; that Divine Truth carries greater Evidence along with it, both in reſpect of the Goodneſs of the Doctrines which are *from God*, and the great Confirmation that is given to them, and the extraordinary Illumination of God's Spirit, which is wont to accompany the Truths of God to the minds of good men, who are ready and diſpoſed to give entertainment to Divine Truth.

I ſhould now have proceeded to the *Second* Advantage which the Spirit of Truth hath above the Spirit of Seduction, namely, that the Motives to perſwade men to adhere to Truth and Holineſs, are more powerful and operative upon the minds of men, than the Motives to the contrary.

And then, *Thirdly*, That thoſe who embrace and obey the Truth of God, have a greater Aſſiſtance, and are acted by a more powerful Spirit

rit and Principle, than any is in the World. And this ſeems to me more eſpecially the meaning of that in the Text, *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: becauſe greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.* But theſe I ſhall not now enter upon.

Sermon XIV.

SERMON XV.

The Advantages of Truth, in Oppoſition to Error.

The ſecond Sermon on this Text.

1 JOHN IV. 4, 5.

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: becauſe greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore ſpeak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

I Proceed to the *Second* Advantage which the Spirit of Truth hath above the Spirit of Error and Seduction, namely, that the Motives which good men have to perſwade them

Volume XII.

them to adhere to Truth and Holineſs are more powerful, than the Motives to the contrary. They who embraced the Chriſtian Religion did firmly believe the eternal Rewards and Puniſhments of another World; and this Principle of Faith being fix'd and rooted in them, made them victorious over all the temptations of the World, over all the allurements and terrors of it; becauſe they were fully perſwaded of the Happineſs and Miſery of another world; the Happineſs of thoſe who continued ſtedfaſt in the Faith and Obedience of the Goſpel, and the dreadful Miſery and Puniſhment of thoſe who diſobeyed the Goſpel of Chriſt, or apoſtatized from the Profeſſion of it. Hence it was that they were not to be moved by any temporal Conſiderations, either of Eaſe and Advantage, or of Trouble and Perſecution in this World. Their eternal intereſt lay ſo near their hearts, and they were ſo fully poſſeſt with the belief of the everlaſting Rewards and Puniſhments of another life,

life, that they overlook'd the goods and evils of this life; and all temporal Conſiderations, put into the Scales againſt their everlaſting intereſt, were of no weight and moment with them. Sermon XV.

And this our Apoſtle very particularly inſiſts upon in this Epiſtle, *Ch.* 5. 4, 5. *Whatſoever is born of God, overcometh the world*; the Children of God are victorious over the temptations of the World; and then he tells us what it is that makes them ſo, *and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our Faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jeſus is the Son of God?* The believing that *Jeſus is the Son of God*, infers the belief of his Doctrine, and conſequently of that eminent part of it, the eternal Recompence of another World, which whoſoever firmly believes, will be able to reſiſt and overcome all the temptations of this World. For by the belief of the Chriſtian Religion, and Faith in the Son of God, we are fully aſſur'd of the reality and

and certainty of the mighty Rewards and Puniſhments of another World, tho' they be future and at a diſtance; and a firm perſwaſion of theſe things, makes them in ſome ſort preſent to us as to their Efficacy and Operation: for to a wiſe and conſiderate Man, a great good, or a great evil, which he believes will certainly befall him, according as he manageth his affairs well or ill, tho' it be at ſome diſtance, is of greater force than a far leſſer good or evil which is preſent and nearer at hand. And of this we ſee many inſtances in the temporal Concerns of men. A prudent Man will forego his preſent eaſe and pleaſure, and part with a preſent advantage, lay down ready Mony, upon the certain proſpect of a far greater benefit that will come to him ſome years hence; and will undergo preſent pain and trouble, to prevent a far greater miſchief and inconvenience; and upon this Principle of the belief of future good and evil, all the great affairs of the world are managed. Upon this Principle men Plow and Sow, and venture

venture their Eſtates in Traffick to foreign parts, and truſt out their preſent Stock, and purchaſe Reverſions, and take Phyſick, and cut off a Limb, and run all thoſe hazards of Eſtate and Life, which we ſee men every day do; and all this for the ſecuring of ſome great advantage, or the preventing of ſome great miſchief, which tho' it be future and at a diſtance, yet they probably or certainly foreſee will happen to them.

And this Principle is ſo much the ſtronger, and of greater force and efficacy, in matters of greater moment and importance, where the good hoped for, or the evil feared, is infinitely great, and concerns us for ever. If we firmly believe the reality and certainty of it, no temporal advantage or affliction can come in competition with them, in the calculation and account of a wiſe Man; becauſe there is no proportion between finite and infinite, between the goods and evils which are *temporal*, and thoſe which are *eternal*;

ternal; tho' the one be *ſeen*, and the other *not ſeen*; tho' the one be *preſent* and *near* to us, and the other *future* and at a *great diſtance*.

Upon this Principle the firſt Chriſtians continued firm and ſtedfaſt in the belief and obedience of the Goſpel, and were bold and open in the Profeſſion of it, notwithſtanding all the cruel aſſaults of Perſecution, tho' they hazarded the loſs of all that was dear to them in this World, and expoſed themſelves to the ſuffering of whatever is grievous and terrible to fleſh and blood. They *gloried in tribulation*; and did not only patiently ſubmit to the greateſt ſufferings, but heartily praiſed God, who *accounted them worthy to ſuffer for his name*; *they took joyfully the ſpoiling of their goods, knowing that in heaven they had a better and more enduring ſubſtance*; *they were tortur'd, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better reſurrection*; and when they were harraſſed with all the evils and calamities of human life, yet they *fainted not*, knowing *that their light afflicti-*

Sermon XV.

on which was but for a moment, would work for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, having their minds fix'd, *not upon the things which are ſeen, but the things which are not ſeen; the things which are ſeen being but temporal, but the things which are not ſeen being eternal.*

Thus they overcame the World, not by the Force and Power of this World, but by the belief of another World, and of the mighty Rewards and Puniſhments of it. And this *Faith purified their hearts,* and reformed their lives, and made them *ſtedfaſt and unmoveable* in their holy Profeſſion, and raiſed their minds above all the temptations and terrors of preſent and ſenſible things.

Let us now ſee on the contrary what kind of Motives and Arguments falſe Teachers uſe to ſeduce men to their pernicious ways. *They ſpeak from the world,* and commonly make uſe of baſe and low and temporal Conſiderations, of little tricks and devices, and *all deceiveableneſs of unrighteouſ-*

Volume XII.

righteouſneſs (as the Scripture calls it) to make Diſciples, and gain Proſelytes. They terrifie them with temporal dangers and inconveniences, and repreſent to them Suffering and Perſecution and death, in all their frightful ſhapes, to deter them from Profeſſion of the true Religion: they ſet before them all manner of worldly baits and allurements, Eaſe, and Wealth, and Preferment; they promiſe them liberty from the ſtrictneſs of thoſe Laws and Rules which Religion ties them up to. By theſe Arts and Arguments the *Gnoſticks* of old uſed to tempt men from Chriſtianity, and to ſhake their conſtancy in the Profeſſion of it: and the ſame ways are ſtill put in practice by Seducers at this day. They tell men of a glorious Church that hath great power and intereſt in the World; they amuſe them with a great deal of outward pomp and ceremony; they promiſe them preferment and great worldly Advantages by coming over to them; they threaten them with Fire and Faggot, with Perſecutions and Maſſacres; and where they have

have Power, they hold them faſt when they have gained them, by the terrour of an Inquiſition; they promiſe them liberty, and what by the looſeneſs of their caſuiſtical Divinity, and by the eaſineſs of their Penances, and Abſolutions, and the cheats of their Indulgences, they have deviſed ways to reconcile almoſt the worſt life that any man can lead, with fair hopes of getting to Heaven at laſt. They tell them indeed, they muſt make ſome ſtop in Purgatory: but they have ſo many ways to releaſe men from thoſe Sufferings, as do very much abate the terror of them to any man that hath but credulity enough to believe them: for beſides the vaſt Treaſure of Merits in the common Bank of the Church, which the Pope hath in his diſpoſal, and which no body ought to doubt but that they are faithfully imployed by him for the eaſe and deliverance of Souls in Purgatory; I ſay, beſides theſe, there are ſo many particular ways of effecting this buſineſs, that a man of ordinary diſcretion, with an indifferent Purſe, may ſo order

Sermon XV.

Volume XII.

the matter, that he ſhall only paſs through Purgatory, but need not make any ſtay in *that place of torments.*

But tho' theſe be their common Motives and Inducements to draw men to their Communion, yet they do not wholly omit the Arguments taken from the eternal Happineſs and Miſery of men in another world: for to give them their due, there are no people in the world more prodigal of eternal Salvation and Damnation; they promiſe the one upon the eaſieſt terms, and threaten the other upon the leaſt diſpleaſure: if a man be in their Communion, he can hardly fail of Salvation; and if he be out of it, and differ from them in the leaſt point of Faith, tho' but of their own making, he is ſure to be damn'd, tho' he had the Graces and Virtues, the Sanctity and Charity of an Angel: and this is the true Reaſon why theſe Arguments, which are ſo powerful in themſelves, ſignifie ſo little from their mouths; becauſe every man that hath read the Bible,

Bible, and underſtands the Chriſtian Religion, plainly ſees that they have made terms of Salvation and Damnation quite different from thoſe which God hath conſtituted; ſo that theſe Motives, which are ſo ſtrong and mighty in themſelves, quite loſe their edge and force, when they are managed by Seducers in ſo undue a manner, and to ends and purpoſes ſo croſs to the main Deſign of Chriſtianity. This is the *Second* Advantage which the Spirit of Truth hath above the Spirit of Error and Seduction, that the Motives to perſwade men to adhere to Truth and Holineſs, are really in themſelves more powerful than the Motives to Error and Seduction. Sermon XV.

Thirdly, Thoſe who ſincerely embrace and obey the Truth of God, have a greater Aſſiſtance, and are acted by a more powerful Spirit and Principle, than that which is in the world; and this ſeems more eſpecially to be the meaning of the Reaſon here given in the Text, why the Spirit of Truth is victorious over the Spirit of Error and Seduction; *Ye are of*

God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world; that is, The Spirit which is in good men, is more powerful than the Devil, that evil Spirit which inſpires and acts *the children of diſobedience.*

For the farther Explication of this, I ſhall do theſe *three* things.

I. Shew that there are theſe two Principles in the world, the Spirit of God, and the Devil, very active and powerful in good and bad men.

II. That the Spirit of God, which is in good men, is greater than he that is in the world.

III. In what ways the Spirit of God doth move and aſſiſt good men.

I. That there are theſe two Principles in the world, the Spirit of God, and the Devil, very active and powerful, the one in good, the other in bad men. This is very credible in

in the general, from the universal Tradition and Consent of Mankind, in the belief of good and evil Spirits attending men, and prompting them to good and evil: but we, who embrace the Revelation of the Gospel, have a much firmer and surer ground for it, nothing being more plain and frequent in Scripture, than that the holy Spirit of God guides and assists good men in doing the will of God; and that the Devil *works in the children of disobedience*, and is always ready to tempt men to, and promote any evil Action or Design. From hence it is that the Scripture does almost every where ascribe all good motions and actions to the operation and influence of God's grace and holy Spirit upon the Minds of men; and the sins of men to the temptation and suggestion of the Devil; and this is so well known to any one conversant in the holy Scriptures, that I need not cite particular Texts for the proof of it. Sermon XV.

'Tis true indeed, that the Motions of God's holy Spirit, and the

Volume XII.

Suggeſtions of the Devil, are very ſecret to us, and imperceptible by us, ſo that no man can ſay certainly, that this good inclination or action is an immediate Motion of God's holy Spirit in me, or that evil Thought and Deſign is an immediate Suggeſtion of the Devil; it is ſufficient for us, that we are aſſured from Divine Revelation in general, that the Spirit of God very frequently does, and is always ready to aſſiſt good men in the doing or ſuffering of God's Will; as the evil Spirit, where God permits him, is always buſy to tempt and ſeduce men to evil. And this ought not to be ſtrange to us, becauſe our Saviour hath expreſly told us, that the Spirit of God works in men after an imperceptible manner, *John* 3. 8. *The wind bloweth where it liſteth, and thou heareſt the ſound thereof, but canſt not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: So is every one that is born of the Spirit.* Tho' we do not know the manner of the Spirit's working, nor perceive the operations of it upon our minds, yet we find the Effects of it in the renovation and ſanctification

on

on of our hearts. Thus by undeniable Arguments men are assured of a Divine Providence governing the world, tho' men do not always see, nor can make out to others the particular interpositions of it, so as to say that this or that was an immediate Effect of Divine Providence. To know certainly that a thing *is*, it is not necessary that we should be able to give a particular account of all its operations, and the manner of them; these may be hidden from us, and yet we may be sufficiently assured by other Arguments that there is such a thing. Men are sure they have Souls, tho' they can give no account how the actions of Understanding, and Remembrance, and Sensation are produced by them: so it is in the present case, we are sufficiently assured from the Word of God, that good and bad Spirits have a great influence upon the Minds of Men, tho' we be not conscious to their operations, and the manner of them.

II. The Spirit of God which is in good

Volume XII.

good men is greater than he that is in the World; he is more able and ready to aſſiſt men to Good Purpoſes, than the Devil is to tempt and help forward that which is Evil. And this will appear, if we conſider theſe *three* things.

1. The Spirit of God is more powerful than the Devil; and this is ſo evident of it ſelf, that it needs no proof.

2. The Spirit of God is as forward and willing to aſſiſt men to Good Purpoſes, as the Devil is to the contrary. That extremity of Malice and Envy which is in evil Spirits does no doubt make them very forward and active to do all the Miſchief they can to Mankind, by tempting and ſeducing them to ſin: but on the other hand, the utmoſt Perfection of Goodneſs which in God is more and greater than the Malice of the Devil, will incline more ſtrongly the holy Spirit of God to pity, and aid, and help good men, than the Malice of the Devil can urge him to procure the Harm

Harm and Miſchief of Mankind; and if we could ſuppoſe their Will and Inclinations equal; yet our Comfort is their Power is not. Sermon XV.

3. The Spirit of God hath a more free and immediate acceſs to the Minds of good Men, and a more intimate conjunction with and operation upon them, than the Devil. The Spirit of God is always preſent to us, and willing to dwell and abide in us, and ready to help and aſſiſt us, if we be ready to obey his dictates, and comply with his holy and bleſſed Motions; if we did not reſiſt, and quench, and grieve him, he would always take up his abode and habitation in us, and would be continually exciting, and guiding, and aſſiſting us to that which is good; he knows our Hearts, and ſees all the ſecrets of our Souls; knows all our Inclinations, knows our weakneſs and our danger, what Aſſiſtance we want, and when it will be moſt ſeaſonable; and is as intimate to us, and as conſcious to all the

Volume XII.

the Motions of our Spirits, as we our ſelves are.

But now the Devil is under great reſtraint, and cannot make nearer approaches to any man than God permits him; he does not know our hearts, nor can pry into the ſecret of our thoughts. God *knows*, but the Devil does but *gueſs* at the Thoughts, and Deſigns, and Inclinations of men; he hath no power over us, nor no acceſs to us, but what we give him, or God permits. By obedience to God's Will, and reſiſting the Temptations of the Devil to ſin and diſobedience, we may not only keep out the Devil, but keep him at a great diſtance, and make him *flee from us*, ſo that we ſhall have little trouble or moleſtation from him: for tho' he be unwearied in his malicious Attempts to ruin our Souls, yet becauſe he cannot be every where, he haunts thoſe moſt where he hath greateſt hopes of ſucceſs, and is too eager and intent upon Miſchief to employ his time and temptations where he hath been

been often foiled, and hath reaſon to deſpair of victory. So that if all things be conſider'd, it is our own fault if we want the aſſiſtance of God's Holy Spirit, or if the Devil have any great power over us: for God does not uſually, but upon great provocation, take away his Holy Spirit from men, and lay them open to the aſſaults and temptations of the Devil. If any be *led captive by the Devil at his pleaſure*, it is thoſe who have wilfully forſaken God, and *ſold themſelves to do wickedly.*

III. We will conſider in what ways the Spirit of God doth move and aſſiſt good men. Theſe *two* ways.

1. By exciting good Motions in us, and enabling us to bring them to effect.

2. By ſupporting us under Perſecution for Religion.

1. By exciting good Motions in us,

us, and enabling us to bring them to effect. Theſe the Apoſtle puts together, *Phil.* 2. 13. *For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleaſure.* It is he that ſtirs up good Inclinations in us, and carries them on to effect. And this he makes an Argument why we ſhould be diligent and induſtrious in the work of our Salvation, becauſe God is ſo ready to aſſiſt us; *Work out your own ſalvation with fear and trembling: for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, of his good pleaſure.*

2. By ſupporting us under Perſecution for Religion. In caſe of extraordinary Temptations, and violent Aſſaults upon our Conſtancy in Religion, by fierce and cruel Perſecutions, God affords immediate and extraordinary Supports to good men, whereby they are many times born up under the greateſt Sufferings, not only with patience, but with Comfort and *joy unſpeakable and full of glory.* Where ever God ſuffers good men to be

be tempted above Humanity, he affords them an immediate Divine Aſſiſtance, to bear them up and make them victorious. So St. *Peter* tells us, 1 *Pet.* 4. 4. That thoſe who *ſuffer and are reproached for the name of Chriſt, the ſpirit of glory and of God reſteth upon them.* So likewiſe St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. ſpeaking of thoſe who had not yet been ſet upon by any ſharp Perſecution, *No temptation hath taken you, but ſuch as is common to man*, εἰ μὴ ἀνθρώπινος, nothing but what is *humane*, what the Spirit of a man may bear: but if ſuch a caſe happen, of Temptation above Nature, and the ſpirit of a man be too weak to ſupport it ſelf under it, God will in that caſe afford men immediate and extraordinary Supports and Comforts, *God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above what ye are able; but will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that you may be able to bear it*; and then it immediately follows, *Wherefore my dearly beloved, flee from Idolatry*; becauſe God hath promiſed ſuch an extraordinary aſſiſtance, in caſe of Perſecution Sermon XV.

Volume XII.

ſecution for Religion, therefore he encourageth them to continue ſtedfaſt in the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and cautions them againſt Apoſtacy to the Heathen Idolatry.

The Inference from all this Diſcourſe, is to encourage us to continue ſtedfaſt in the Truth, and in the practice of our holy Religion, *to hold faſt the profeſſion of our Faith without wavering*, and not to ſuffer our ſelves to be *ſhaken with every wind of Doctrine, by the arts and cunning of thoſe who lie in wait to deceive*; who *creep into houſes, and lead captive ſilly women, laden with ſins, and led away by divers luſts.* You ſee what kind of perſons theſe falſe Teachers uſed to proſelyte; women of no virtue, of a proſtituted reputation, *laden with ſins, and led away with divers luſts*; a Character that notoriouſly agrees to ſome Seducers of our times.

Therefore let us *continue in the things which we have heard*, and not ſuffer our ſelves to be *moved from our*

Sermon XV.

our ſtedfaſtneſs. The more we conſider our Religion, and compare it with the unqueſtionable Revelation of God in the holy Scriptures, the greater Reaſon we ſhall ſee to adhere to it. The Doctrines of our Religion are *of God*, plainly contained in his Word, and ſuch as are worthy of him, and likely to proceed from him, and tend to the Good and Happineſs of Mankind, to make men really better, and to qualifie them for that happineſs which God hath promiſed to holy Souls. The Doctrines of our Religion are free from the Suſpicions of a worldly Intereſt and Deſign. But if we conſider the Doctrines and Innovations of that Church which pretends to be the only Chriſtian Catholick Society in the world, we ſhall find that they are of another ſtamp, and of a quite contrary tendency, that they ſavour ſo rankly of a worldly Intereſt, that any impartial man would at firſt ſight judge them to be the Contrivances of worldly, covetous, and ambitious men, and

that

Volume XII.

that they did not look like Divine Truths, and Doctrines that are *of God*, but that they are *of the world*, and therefore they that propagate them, and would seduce men to them, *speak from the world, and the world heareth them.*

FINIS.